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Next Issue.....

YOU GOT NO FRIENDS IN THIS
WORLD --ORSON SCOTT CARD

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROGER ZELAZNY
CONDUCTED BY NEAL WILGUS

REALITY IN DRAG
A PROFILE OF PHILIP K. DICK
BY CHARLES PLATT

SCIENCE FICTION AND POLITICAL
ECONOMY
BY MACK REYNOLDS

I'M SURE YOUR COLLECTION OF
OLD ZIP CODES IS OUTSTANDING
MR. GEIS. ITS JUST THAT THE
SMITHSONIAN DOESN'T HAVE ANY
ROOM IN THE ATTIC RIGHT NOW



ALIEN THOUGHTS

BY THE EDITOR

ENERGY...AND THE LIVING IS EASY....

The pundits (a Hindu word meaning learned teachers or critics) say we are entering a new era---new cultural shocks---as first big business, then government, then small business, and finally the individual and family adopt in ever-greater degree the electronic tools involved in the computer and its uses.

Every house, every apartment is supposed to end up with a computer which will do everything from keeping the budget to frying eggs for breakfast, from keeping all those lists handy (that you always misplace) to programing your TV and telephone calls.

They foresee a time when your work will be done at home, sitting for a few hours before your computer, linked to a grid, or linked to a feed from your employer. Paperwork will become screenwork.

Your finances will be electronic: you won't write checks, you'll type them on your computer and direct amounts to various accounts (while in a corner of the screen your running balance will be ever visible...).

It all sounds ideal.

But I'm still waiting for the TV set that resembles a framed picture in thickness and which will be wall hung... I'm still waiting for the small one-two-three person aircraft that were to supplant the automobile (a helicopter in every garage).

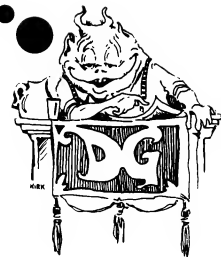
And I'm still waiting for the surge in personal use of the micro-fiche process.

Promises, promises....

What we've gotten is a huge stumbling block in the electronic revolution: nobody seems able to keep other, smart, larceny-minded people from stealing money and vital information from computer memories and records. What is needed is a simple foolproof method to lock-in computer information/records.

Yes, there are complicated ways available to corporations and governments devised by computer experts: codes, specially written programs... But for the Computer-Age to get off the ground there has to be developed a way, a method, a device, which will allow a moron to secure his electronically deposited money, to have permanent electronic proof of transactions, to insure privacy of his personal computer input.

What we have now are computers which save some energy and some effort, but which are essentially substitute clerks, substitute typists and sub-



stitute mailmen. They are worth their purchase price and upkeep because they save more money than they use.

And, with some refinements and some expansions into small business due to cost-savings and large production runs of standardized components, that's where the vaunted electronic age will stall.

Because of a need for permanent records and privacy.

Too many people fear putting a lot of vital information into a computer memory and then accidentally pushing a wrong button---ziiiiiip! Everything wiped!

As we stand now paper is still king. Computers are fancy, efficient tools to avoid some paperwork, but mostly they are tools to make paperwork easier and quicker.

But only a very few people want to save the daily newspaper...or the magazines or books they buy. And I do think we will have one day a small console attached to the TV set. You buy a feed from a local cable company---you are allowed to view the contents page of a new issue of a magazine...or allowed to see the "cover" of a book, plus a descriptive blurb---and you key in a purchase of that magazine or book. That is, you are allowed access to its "pages" for a predetermined time. You'd pay for only that time you had the book or magazine on the screen, and could switch off anytime and come back later.

You could also pay for the right to record (copy) all or part of the book or magazine. [That presents problems, though---how to prevent one party recording from being copied for free and distributed immediately to an audience of non-payers or low-

payers-to-the-first-payer?]

Again, electronic crime rears its ugly head. Pirating now of recordings and films is a severe problem. Pirating of electronic shows, books, magazines, etc. would be a monumental difficulty, and it is foreseeable, has been foreseen, and is the one roadblock to the brave new world we've been promised.

It may never be resolved well enough to allow widespread public use of personal computers linked to libraries, banks, stores, entertainments.

At least, in a capitalistic, profit-oriented society.

If we all worked for the government, and if the government provided all books, magazines, TV programs, music, etc., then everything could be "free". No point in piracy.

But that would be too high a price to pay.

THE WAITING GAME

Elton Elliott and I were talking about near-future space travel...

He had asked Gerald Diggers, the president of the L-5 Society (who was in Portland, on a talk show) what research had been done on algae tanks and other ways of providing oxygen for the air in L-5 space cities.

Mr. Diggers replied that the L-5 Society, at least, was doing no research at all in those areas.

Elton also mentioned that there are no big boosters being developed for the space program. And of course no Skylabs are in place---or planned, apparently.

In short---and long---the future of living-in-space for mankind is on the far, far back burner. A cynic would add that it's on the back burner of a wood stove.

The L-5 enthusiasts are waiting/hoping for the government to act, to spend all the billions necessary on R&D.

Given the current move to cut the budget in order to fight inflation (and get reelected) among politicians, and given the precariousness of the economy, large expansions of N.A.S.A. budgets are impossible.

So if the L-5 enthusiasts who yearn for a new frontier and freedom and adventure are to get their wish, they'll have to put all their money where their mouths are...a highly unlikely prospect.

I suspect a Space Frontier Corporation could be founded and could issue stock, and could do some research and development...might even plan on putting up a tiny L-5 experimental habitat. But I also suspect that certain technological developments

here on Earth have to be made first in solar power technology, computer micro-miniaturization (robot technology, actually) and space biology (via the space shuttle).

After that...it might be a Go for private space exploration and living.

How long before this is possible? Pick a figure---ten years? Twenty? Never?

UPDATE--3-8-80 President Carter is reportedly reading heavy 1980-1 budget cuts; NASA is to be cut around 740 million dollars, further delaying the space shuttle program.

THE ROBOTS ARE COMING, THE ROBOTS ARE-----AAAAAARRRRHHH!!

The robots are here. Now. And from the newspaper report I saw, they almost all belong to the Japanese and the Germans.

Of the 2700+ robots in existence, all but a few hundred are working overseas. The USA is lagging.

We are talking of industrial robots now. Machines not in humanoid form, designed and built to think and act according to a computer intelligence/program.

The Japanese, in fact, are designing a totally robot-run cybernetic factory.

It would appear that we are on the edge of another industrial revolution (so often talked about, so slow in really appearing) which will burst upon us after the imminent debt collapse runs its course throughout the world. [Give it ten years.]

The desperate need to save on energy costs and labor costs are the stark motives of the giant national and international corporations behind the robots.

If production machines can be monitored and repaired by other machines which are in turn monitored by computers...the process can extend backwards to the transporting of materials to the factory...to the mines.... And forward to automated wholesale and retail outlets.

We have the automatic elevator now, and we'll soon have the self-driven, self-loaded and unloaded truck.

And we'll have tremendous problems with big unions fighting to keep jobs for their members, tremendous social problems of unemployment and the necessary mechanisms for getting purchasing power to the unemployed/unemployable without insulting and humiliating them.

Schools will have to teach courses in How To Use A Robot...How To Cope In A Robot Service Society....

The time may be approaching when the major energy costs of production

will be getting human workers to and from work. Using robot workers who never leave the factory would save enormous amounts of energy. [Either resort to robots, or require human workers to live in or adjacent to the factory!]

The whole thrust of the future is going to be bringing work, food, entertainment to the people, instead of requiring a vast private transportation system of autos and support systems to bring people to work, stores, entertainments.

The suburbs will slowly die.

The cities will congest again and require extreme social controls. We'll have manhives a hundred years from now.

I HAVE IN MY HAND---A MINIBOOK

I bought it at the supermarket this morning, from a rack at the checkout stand.

It's five inches high by 3-1/4" wide. It's called 'A Romantic Nov-elette' and sells for 49¢. It is 96 printed pages long.

The title isn't important (UN-FORGETTABLE SUMMER by Grace Goodwin). What is important is that this line of minibooks may be a sign of the future for softcover books.

It's no secret that softcovers have reached a price level---\$1.75 and up and up---which makes their purchase something no longer casual and impulsive. People are thinking twice about buying pocket books now,

and that pause is resulting in at least a 15% drop in sales. As 1980 and 1981 unravel the drop will likely be larger.

And so Globe Publishing Corp. of New York [POB 51, Rouses Point, NY 12979] has perhaps experimentally begun a line of inexpensive little romantic 'books' positioned for impulse purchase.

And I wonder how long before a science fiction publisher tries it? There's only so much room near a supermarket checkout stand ---and the tabloids and Globe seem to have it filled up. Any small-size or inexpensive sf line will have to take its appeal to the pocketbook racks for a test. We'll see what happens.

OF COVERS AND CONTENTS AND ADVERTISING AND SALES THAT GO TO HELL IN THE NIGHT

I haven't been at all happy with the commercial clutter on the cover of SFR for the past year or so. I felt I had to blay away about the Names and such inside in order to attract bookstore browser eyes and curiosity.

But I'm unconvinced all that is really effective...or makes a difference. 95% of the bookstore buyers of SFR know what they're looking

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED ON P. 18



the way it is

YEAH. I GOT A REAL GOOD LOOK AT
THE FLYING SAUCER. IT WAS ROUND AND
RED AND COVERED
WITH 'JESUS
SAVES'
STICKERS.



PROLOGUE: "These columns, written on commission for an Italian science fiction magazine (and showing minor slanting) are appearing for the first, and doubtless last, time in my own language in my own country. I think Robt. Frost did this kind of thing at 40 but he was just start- ing."

SEX AND SCIENCE FICTION

The Honorable Editor has asked me to inaugurate this series of columns with a discussion of the above topic, sex and sexuality in science fiction, that is to say and I hasten to comply, although with a certain ambivalence or perhaps hesitation is the word I am seeking. Sex in science fiction? Well enough, but sex in the literature of science fiction? Or in the lives of its writers? Or -- the good heaven itself forbid -- in the conventions and other social institutions of the field? These are large topics and are to fill one, each of them, with solemnity. Together -- to treat all three within the space of one column -- would not only be an accomplishment of great magnitude but to induce the most thundering depression.

Best to accept delimitation (most of my Collected Works are consciously based on the Hemingway theory that the power comes not from what you say but what you leave out) and discuss sex in the literature of science fiction. One can cheerfully begin by saying that until about 1953 in American genre science fiction there was none at all. There was heavily masked, coded, templated (to use a currently fashionable Academic Word) sex to be sure; aliens carried off women (in the pulp magazines), men carried off or were carried off by machines (in *ASTOUNDING* and *GALAXY*) and the symbolism thereof was understandable to the merest graduate student of psychology but not until Phillip Jose Farmer and Sam Mines conspired as author and editor to publish *THE LOVERS* and its successors in *STARTLING STORIES* did sexuality as an important human drive which had the power to motivate, enlighten, damage or dignify become incorporated into a genre which in its American categorization had already existed for twenty-seven years.

Twenty-seven years of asceticism are not easy to deny; defloration may be accomplished in an instant but its implications often are not understood (let alone repeated) for years. Farmer published a few semi-sequels to *THE LOVERS* (*MOTHER*, *OPEN TO ME MY SISTER*) and in 1958

Theodore Sturgeon was able to smuggle in cautious doses of homosexuality and the polymorphous perverse but as late as 1965 science fiction was still a genre which in the main denied the existence, let alone the extent of human sexuality. All of this began to end with Michael Moorcock's use of *NEW WORLDS* in Great Britain to publish work by writers like J.G. Ballard and Brian Aldiss which made frank use of sexual motivations and activities; two years later in the United States Harlan Ellison's *DANGEROUS VISIONS* produced in book form thirty-three new stories, almost half of which dealt with sexuality as central thematic material.

In the United States and in science fiction matters changed very rapidly in the late nineteen sixties and by the beginning of the current decade novels of great explicitness (Silverberg's *DYING INSIDE* and *THE SECOND TRIP*, my own *BEYOND APOLLO*, Phillip Jose Farmer's *IMAGE OF THE BEAST*) were being published as category science fiction. Short stories in the original anthologies edited by Silverberg, Damon Knight, Harry Harrison, Terry Carr, were also using sexual material in an almost routine fashion. Although 1979/1980 can hardly be called the Promised Land of Science Fiction -- which, in fact and showing my age I grumble was most likely in 1952 and perhaps no later than 1958 -- it is a time when the science fiction writer, particularly in the novelistic form, is able to deal with sexuality as (s)he was able to

Barry N. Malzberg

deal with technology or apocalypse thirty years ago.

Why was sexuality so late in arriving in science fiction? Two somewhat interlocking explanations apply: Science fiction has always been a genre literature in the United States read by young people; perhaps 90% of its readers are under the age of twenty-five, 50% under the age of sixteen and young people are exposed to parental and social sanctions of the most unpleasant sort; then too, science fiction was, until the mid-sixties a magazine literature, most of whose important writers and works moved through the newsstand magazines and a kind of censorship is imposed by magazine distributors and wholesalers which is even more rigorous (or was at that time) than that imposed by book publishers.

Almost all science fiction material in book form prior to 1965 had appeared previously in the magazines and more science fiction than any writer or editor of the time would like to admit was produced with at least one and a half eyes on the whims of magazine distributors who feared to put into national markets material which might be banned in the more conservative communities and thus hinder the functioning of the entire network. A kind of least common denominator applied to magazine science fiction: If a given story could be perceived as potentially giving offense anywhere it was the path of least resistance to reject it.

Nonetheless, here we are. The dear old field has changed greatly and is in the view of its more conservative critics no less dirty than any other branch of modern literature; the conservative critics (some of whom are barely forty years old) mutter and murmur but they have a lessening hold upon the audience and many of the conservative writers whom the conservative critics adore or adored have themselves fallen off the wagon in recent years and have resolved to show Harlan Ellison or J.G. Ballard a thing or three. Isaac Asimov's *THE GODS THEMSELVES* has a central section which is about nothing other than sex and Robert Heinlein's three most recent novels -- *THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST*, *TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE*, *I WILL FEAR NO EVIL* -- are about not only sex but about sexual perversity and damages, 200,000 word investigations of materials -- sexual crossover, narcissism, self-flagellation -- which even the literary writers in this country rarely practice at such length.

On balance it's time to consider the question of sex in science fic-

tion as one which has been resolved, by the end of the current decade, in favor of sex. The issue is important now only in historical context and that is where the real critical work of the next half-century is going to come from: To what degree did the practical taboos under which it functioned as a form of popular literature was science fiction altered? Science fiction has been regarded by literary criticism for a long time as a debased if energetic form of popular literature but how much of that debasement was imposed rather than intrinsic? To what degree, in other words, may science fiction be seen as victim rather than perpetrator of its greatest weaknesses? How much false characterization, contrived plotting, untrue representation of human behavior was forced upon its writers who were working within an arena which in order to do their work at all made that work be done in a certain way?

In short, science fiction may not have been populated by bad writers or bad editors but extraordinarily good ones who, functioning under taboos which would have destroyed those less capable, were able to do far more than the distributors and wholesalers ever suspected. Science fiction, viewed from this context, may be conceived as a kind of triumph of the human spirit, a monument to cunning.

Then again, it may not. Maybe it was all junk about people without genitals for kids who could barely read. But I do not think so and you do not think so and that is why we meet today, many thousands of miles from my home, in an arena transcendent enough to perhaps, be of spirit.

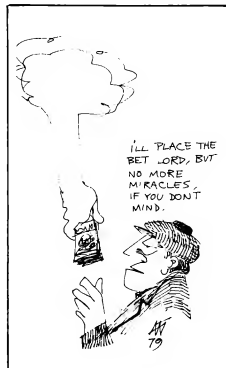
THE SCIENCE FICTION OF SCIENCE FICTION

Robert Silverberg's short story, *SCHWARTZ AMONG THE GALAXIES*, has given rise to gloomy speculation, not an uncommon reaction to Silverberg (who is himself a rather cheery fellow) but not one of more complexity than usual. What *SCHWARTZ* suggests to me is that science fiction is doomed by its own nature to eternally be a second-rate form of literature and I think that this is unfortunate because so much of it -- including this very short story -- is first rate. It is of a mystery.

SCHWARTZ AMONG THE GALAXIES is the last short story Silverberg ever wrote (the novels *SHADRACH IN THE FURNACE*, 1955 and *LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE*, 1980, succeed); it appeared in Ballantine's now extinct *STELLAR SCIENCE FICTION* original paperback series in the first issue, dated late 1973. Schwartz, a 22nd century physicist with emotional problems is a science fiction fan; on a Luna commercial flight he reads a magazine containing stories of interstellar travel, alien invasion and so on while dribbling coffee over himself and being rebuffed by stewardesses, he dreams of a better time, a better age while reading his pulp science fiction and ultimately puts the magazine away to sink into a deep depression as the rocket approaches Luna.

What Silverberg is saying -- if I read him correctly and I usually do -- is that science fiction in any era is going to be a junk medium; that the science fiction of a science fictional time will partake of the same elements of fantasy and escape which much of it does today and that the very purposes served by science fiction will render it contemptible in absolute literary terms. Literature teaches us of life, Silverberg is suggesting, science fiction sends us messages of irrationality; Schwartz traveling the black holes of 4722 would yet meander through pulp imaginings, perhaps dreaming of matter transference.

The story is therefore not only a work of fiction -- Silverberg counts it among his five best, I think it somewhat lower than that



but it is remarkable -- but one of literary criticism, an attack upon the very genre from which it comes and as such it is absolutely devastating, it is a demolition of science fiction so compelling that one surmises that if the editor of *STELLAR* (Judy-Lynn Benjamin del Rey) had truly understood what Silverberg was saying she would have refused to publish the story. It is easy to understand why it takes its position as the last short story Silverberg ever wrote; there is no place to go from *SCHWARTZ AMONG THE GALAXIES* as a science fiction writer unless one consciously cuts back on the range and implications of the material, retreats to more familiar territory. This Silverberg has done in the two recent (and perhaps final) novels.

SCHWARTZ is the final word but it has antecedent in Samuel R. Delany's famous *AYE AND GOMORRAH* which appeared in *DAUGHTERS VISIONS* a dozen years ago; in that story the science fiction of today has become the cheap adventure fiction of the next century and is read in the main by pervers who are sexually aroused by (desexualized) astronauts. In one shattering off-glimpse of the cheap magazines and paperbacks kept by such a pervers (who picks up the narrator, an astronaut, and takes the narrator back to his apartment) Delany has allowed us the same devastating insight that Silverberg extends at length: Science fiction is junk. Junk by definition misrepresents, lies, cheapens, manipulates, junk in a way destroys but ultimately junk can serve only the lowest purposes of those who consume it. Delany has other (and perhaps less profound) matters on his mind in *AYE AND GOMORRAH* but he makes a case which Silverberg was able, in the best tradition, to go back and explore at greater length years later.

Well, what about it? As I said, *SCHWARTZ AMONG THE GALAXIES* has led to complex and brooding speculations on the nature of the field to which I have dedicated large portions of my life and almost all of my best creative energies and I am not sure

that I have resolved all of the questions that have emerged. Is science fiction doomed indeed to be a second-rate literature by nature? Or is there another way to look at the matter? Might the genre be shaped, or at least taught, to lead us toward an exploration of our better rather than our worst possibilities, might science fiction become not a literature of escape but one of survival? Might science fiction somehow be worked around in short to save the world?

Science fiction as World Saviour is not a new catechism. Its early American writers and aficionados in the nineteen thirties believed in nothing less and the history of fandom in the nineteen thirties according to the Concordance of Moskowitz is nothing less than the history of a small group trying to improve reality and learning eventually that reality was rather resistant. Even as late as the nineteen fifties most of science fiction's most serious practitioners -- Kornbluth, Clifton, Gold, Budrys, Shekley -- believed that the literature had the power to change society, to alter lives. Most science fiction writers no longer believe this. A few of them do but have resorted to mystical rather than practical rationalizations. Alexei Panshin in his 1970's critical works *SF IN DIMENSION* and *FAREWELL TO YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW* sees a science fiction which will give us universes, possibilities and wonder that we have never seen before; science fiction, in short, as transcendent. Robert Heinlein has written three enormous novels beginning with *STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND* which use the devices of science fiction as mystical extrapolation. There is a strong undercurrent in this field yet to be sure, toward the genre's use as a positive, engaging force for its readers.

But then again there is *SCHWARTZ*. There it is, brooding over all of this. Science fiction will always offer easier alternatives, science fiction will always be slanted toward taking its readers out of the world. Only weak people -- modern psychology has led us to understand -- want out of the world. Strong people want in. Science fiction is a literature for the weak. And so on.

I have presented the poles of the argument, shown the ambivalence within not only myself but locked into the field itself and I would like to conclude this column on a positive note, thus pacifying Panshin & Heinlein by offering an outcome but I cannot. I am truly sorry about

this. I do not know what the answer is nor do I have any. Science fiction is an ambivalent genre and I am, perhaps, its most ambivalent writer, my career, my *Collected Works*, have been monument or mausoleum to schism. The field is one thing and yet it is the other. I am one thing and yet the other. I have no answers at all.

It may, this genre, make us better, it may make us worse, it may in its ruined heart make us anything at all. That is as close as I can come to resolution. Like us, science fiction can be anything at all.

And like us, most of the time, it is nothing.

By choice. The path of least resistance. We become what we behold and dare not know the difference.

TWENTY YEARS LATER

In late 1959 the American market for science fiction was in a state of total collapse. A well-known American fan and editor, Earl Kemp, passed around the Detroit World Convention asking for responses to a questionnaire entitled *WHO KILLED SCIENCE FICTION?* and he had enough responses and speculations to publish a book (which won a Hugo Award the year later). Nine tenths of the science fiction magazines which had been publishing only half a decade ago were gone, only two book publishers were even considering novels, the readership of the field, estimated as at close to half a million in the mid-nineteen fifties had apparently dwindled to less than a hundred thousand.

Two major writers, Henry Kuttner and Cyril M. Kornbluth had died within a month of one another early in 1958, the resulting grief, loss and fear (they were younger than most of their contemporaries) had spread a pall of depression over the field which only seemed to deepen as time went on. There were many respondents to Earl Kemp's questionnaire who felt that science fiction indeed had been killed, that its existence as an independent, functioning subgenre of American literature had reached its end. Even now, most science fiction writers who were active at the time are able to talk of the late nineteen fifties only with loathing. Many of them gave up their careers by choice or circumstance then and have never returned.

Twenty years later, American science fiction has evidently not been murdered; it has indeed flour-

COME ON, GOD! I ASK YOU THE MEANING OF LIFE AND YOU TELL ME THERE'S OIL 4000 FEET UNDER THIS VERY ROCK!



ished. Over a thousand titles labelled "science fiction" have been published every year for the past four, no less than fifty writers can be said to be making a substantial living from their writing of science fiction and nothing else and although the magazines may have gone away for good -- there are only three healthy magazines left and two severely damaged -- the science fiction short story lives on in the original anthology form while the science fiction novel has become the most popular commercial category in American book publishing. Nonetheless, American science fiction writers and fans, like survivors of the American economic depression (which occurred exactly half a century ago the week I write this) often wake up screaming in various nights of the soul, could it all happen again? they ask themselves. Regardless of all of the transitions in the field, the expansion of the audience, the essentially benign commercial history of the last decade, is science fiction due for another violent collapse at the end of another decade?

Many factors which applied in 1959 do not, of course, apply today. Science Fiction's audience is vastly expanded; then, too, it is no longer a magazine medium, exposed to the particular circumstances which caused the collapse of the entire pulp distribution network two decades ago. Also, we like to think that we are older and wiser, that we have all learned something about our medium and our audience within this period, we like to think that movies such as STAR WARS, ALIEN, the forthcoming STAR TREK have provided a mass base of interest so large as to make us invulnerable to even the most catastrophic "adjustments".

Still, one does not know. One cannot be certain and there is fear in the marketplace and among the writers. What would be of most interest to overseas readers of the form and what most of them do not really suspect is the degree to which the very quality of fear itself can be said to control the production and marketing of science fiction in America. Most editors publish and acquire books not to be successful but to avoid failure, they seek that which they consider safe and most writers, who are of course at the mercy of these editors function out of the same motivations: They must produce work which will not offend, which will not cause an editor to question the commercial viability of a book and hence reject it. Science fiction like much commercial literature can perhaps be best understood in terms of what

is not written rather than what is. Most of the censorship in this field occurs at the point of origin. Writers, understandably, refuse to write what they know they cannot sell.

What can't they sell? What are the taboos and limitations which editors impose conceptually upon the field? It would perhaps be useful for the edification of all of you to make such a list briefly as long as it is understood that only the fact of taboo remains constant; through the years different topics will be unacceptable, old terrors made safe, but there will always be in science fiction and other popular writing subjects which cannot, with only the extraordinary occasional exception, be broached.

In 1979 a few of these topics are:

- 1) Bleak, downbeat, depressing science fiction which implies a painful termination to present social and cultural fix.
- 2) Science fiction which is highly internalized, that is written from the point of view of a well-defined central character whose perceptions are idiosyncratic and whose stream of consciousness is the central fact of the book.
- 3) Science fiction which implies that contemporary accepted social mores of sexuality, socioeconomic or familial patterning might be corrupting, dangerous or destructive.
- 4) Science fiction which owes less to "plot" -- a logical, progressive ordering of events -- than "mood" -- the effect the events have upon characters.
- 5) Science fiction which is at the hard edge of contemporary scientific investigation... science fiction which denies Einsteinian theory, faster than light travel or social darwinism.

This dismal listing is not meant in any way to imply that I, the writer, in any way endorse some of the tabooed viewpoints. It is merely to say that a science fiction

novel exposed to any one of the five taboos listed above or some others that I could certainly add to the list given more space and time, would, unless it were by a writer of the widest commercial appeal in the genre, almost certainly not find a publisher ... and that writers of the widest commercial appeal almost by definition have become so because of their refusal to write what editors cannot gladly buy. Reluctantly, it is unlikely that any novel embodying one (or, heaven forbid, two or three or four) of these taboos will achieve publication in the American market as I understand it in the coming decade.

It would be easy to end this column with a call for the ending of such taboos, with cries of liberation, with, at least, the ironic suggestion that it was the very taboo-laden atmosphere of 1959 which contributed to the near-collapse of the field and a similar atmosphere of taboo might do the same today unless editors become adventurous, writers daring, readers glamorous and so on. Onward with liberated science fiction! It would be nice to conclude that way and would tie off this column nicely but I do not believe that it is so. I do not feel that science fiction will become liberated or (if it did) that its liberation would have anything to do with avoiding a collapse, a true science fiction might destroy the field commercially and science fiction may be flourishing



in America now precisely to the degree that it is saying less and worse than ever before. Science fiction has become big business in the United States, it is not quite there with movies and television but it is interesting and it is run ultimately -- in almost all cases -- by the same people.

And brave new 1980 to Kornbluth and Kuttner's successors.

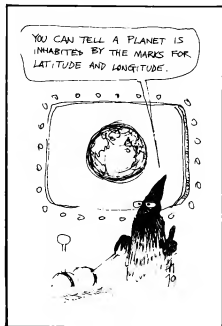
THE ALL-TIME, PRIME TIME, TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER SCIENCE FICTION PLOT

In my last column, I contributed for discussion a number of plot conceptions which would be totally unsaleable in the contemporary American science fiction market. Lest I acquire, in one of my favorite countries, an undesired reputation for bleakness and gloom, I would like to right the balance in this column: having provided plot ideas which would not sell, I would like to contribute several which will. I can virtually guarantee to any writer of routine proficiency and dedication with persistence, fluency and decent acquaintance with editors a sale if we will use any of the following ideas. They have been good in the American markets; for at least the last forty years, they should be good for at least forty more. Perhaps fifty.

THE UNDERGROUND: The protagonist is a member of a future society based upon some exaggeration of present-day circumstance perceived as "trend". A society in which automobiles are banned would be quite serviceable; driving or auto possession are criminal offenses, citizens move only via tramways, public conveyances and so on. Personal freedoms, consequently, have been limited by an autocratic government in the name of "energy survival". The protagonist, a youth in his early twenties, is initially accepting of his society but falls in (perhaps through his girlfriend) with a rowdy bunch who keep forbidden automobiles on a private estate hundreds of miles from the central city. He is horrified and seeks to turn them over to the authorities but is, perhaps, subdued by force. He is then educated by the rowdies into understanding that in the name of "energy survival" the government is well on the way to eroding all personal freedoms; reluctantly at first and then with a growing sense of commitment he makes their cause his own. Their cause of course is to invade the cities by automobile.

The hero assumes leadership of the group when its previous leader is assassinated by government agents led to the hideaway by a corrupt informer within the group. He leads a successful revolution and is at the head of an invading corps of several hundred automobiles who enter the city and free all of its residents from the servility and bleakness of public transport. The corrupt informer turns out to be his second in command; he runs him over with his automobile after a desperate struggle. In the final scene the hero and his girlfriend return to the countryside to obtain more automobiles.

THE OLD MAN: The Old Man is a beggar upon a distant planet; he lives at the bottom of a corrupt, technologically-dominated society; he begs for sustenance; he adopts a small lad who has been abandoned on the streets by a pitiless government which makes waste materials of citizens who cannot sustain themselves. He passes on to the lad much lore and when the lad becomes eighteen tells him that the lad will be the Ruler of the Universe. The Old Man dies, passing on a legacy of a magic coin. The coin lends vast psychic powers to the youth who emplanes upon a starship to Old Earth to follow his destiny. The young man with his magic coin rises to the highest socioeconomic levels of Old Earth. He turns out to be the son of the deposed Old Earth Ruler - the magic coin gives him powers of unconscious recall -- and in an exciting final scene overthrows the corrupt usurper to the throne and assumes his rightful destiny. He, however, never marries.



THE VIGILANTES: A brawling and lusty crew of highly individuated space surveyors land upon Antares VI for a shore leave. They find themselves -- the canny Scot, the redheaded naive kid, the shrewd old engineer, Sparks the Communicator, Lila the Beautiful Mysterious Surveyor -- in the midst of a planetary revolution; a corrupt system based upon slavery is being attacked by a disorganized group of vigilantes who have been pushed back from the castles after an unsuccessful assault. The vigilantes flee to the space surveyors for aid; the space surveyors help them, using little but their wits and such primitive technology as is available aboard the ship; they rig a world-wrecking device and unsettle the old regime. Lila is persuaded by her Vivilante lover to become Queen of the Free Antares but the rest of the crew must of factly pack away their instruments, fuel up and meditatively prepare for further adventures. (NOTE: If the regime being thrown is anti-slavery it might be possible to get a magazine sale on this although book publication would be less likely. It depends upon whether you would rather sell to magazines or book editors; per word they pay about the same.)

RUTILITY AND DISORDER: An old, weak, half-blind Terrestrial Scout with a heart condition and only two pieces of wood is abducted by a Fleet Battalion of Rigelians who seek to torture him for information that will enable them to win the Great War against Terra. The Scout uses his two pieces of wood to build a solar generator in confinement and in between interrogative sessions at which he cleverly outwits the stupid aliens, brings about a simulated Solar Eclipse which panics them as they are afraid this sudden darkening portends ten thousand years of Nightfall. The Rigelians see for help; the scout causes the eclipse to pass and takes the battalion leader under his personal command to return to Earth for surrender. Also, the Terrestrial Scout finds that his eyesight has been much improved by the carotene-laden atmosphere of the Rigelian outpost planet.

AMAZING GRACE: A prophetess appears amidst the superstitious and primitive peoples of an Older Earth and forecasts the wonders to come which includes the Pyramids, the Sphinx, television, radar, automobiles and guns. The primitives, awed and frightened, rise to slay her and she is apparently killed but surfaces in a different guise on another part of the planet where she exerts a powerful benign force upon humanity through the focussing lens of her third eye which is opened only in the late evening.

HOLD THAT TIGER: A child in the American midwest of the early twentieth century is escorted by his father through a marvelous circus in which is seen: a green beast, a three-horned beast, a magical dwarf, a spider with talons of gold, a polar bear who plays cello, a camel who plays saxophone, a doctor who can ingest living material and excrete it in a state of death and similar marvels. The child is suddenly abandoned by his father and abducted by the polar bear cellist who tells the child that he will become part of the exhibition; the child is terrified but his roistering screams are considered by the audience to be merely part of a Screaming Child Wonder Presentation and he can obtain no help at all; he lunges at the polar bear in grief and desperation and before his very eyes sees the dwarf become a marvelous flower, the flower opening up to speed the child from the dream to the reality which is that of his deathbed at the turn of the twentieth century. (NOTE: If this is preferred in the young adult market the child does not wake on his deathbed but in his father's arms outside the circus; the father asks him if he would prefer to see the circus or to sleep and the child says childishly, "I am frightened, I would like to sleep" as his father carries him away.)

I cannot guarantee a sale on any of these plots ... there are no guarantees in our very complex, painful and competitive business. On the other hand I can promise you -- assuming, once again, that you have friends among the editors and every writer had better find them sooner rather than later -- a swift and sympathetic reading, a concerned and passionate response and perhaps a contract and in due course an advance to speed you through the writing of all the sequels to these novels through all the eight to twelve to (occasionally) twenty-two years of your productive and creative, your artistic and dedicated, your daring and your soul-testing writing career.



THE ALTER-EGO VIEWPOINT

Editor's Note: This is essentially the third GALAXY book review column I wrote for Hank Stine. It was not used due to the impending and actual sale of GALAXY to GALILEO.

With the editing of some GALAXY-related chit-chat in the beginning, here is what I wrote.

"Let me at them books, Geis! Don't hold me back. Unleash me! Let me---"

I haven't laid a finger on you, Alter. You're free to say whatever you want. *Shudder* All the codes of fair reviewing will shatter, but....do your awful thing.

"My first victim will be James White's THE WATCH BELOW [Ballantine, \$1.75]. First White stacked the deck in the matter of the handful of people (including two young women and a doctor) who survived in the water-tight holds of a sunk tanker loaded with food and other supplies.

"The ship was torpedoed during World War II, and these people not only survived, they married, had children, and those children grew up and had children... The doctor even passed his knowledge on to his son.

"Through the yearsthese people try to signal passing ships, but fail. Various schemes for escape fail. The people endure...and gradually eat away at the vast hoard of food in the holds. And the ship rusts....

"It also seems there is a parallel story of aliens in a fleet of ships escaping their boiling planet, seeking a new home. Most of the aliens are in deepfreeze till the new home is reached, but the crews, scheduled to rotate duty---so many years in the freeze, so many keeping the fleet on course and running smoothly---discover that after the second revival their brains deteriorate. One on-duty crew decide to 'warm' a few females and stay on duty for generations, passing on to their children the knowledge and duties required to keep the fleet on course and in good maintenance.

"Now, the crux of all this is that the aliens are water-creatures, and they are aiming to make a home in Earth's oceans. And they splash-in just about the time the air and food are giving out in the tanker.

"See, the aliens' exploratory probe of Earth showed the natives ---us---to be uncivilized and unlikely to cause problems in the

oceans. But when they arrive we humans have an advanced civilization and it is past 2000 A.D.

"Naturally a state of war exists instantly. And the key to solving this problem is the near-death handful of humans who still barely exist in the Gulf Trader.

"James White writes smoothly and he draws credible characters and he has good pace and suspense, but he fractured my credulity with the set-up and the coincidences. Nice try, though."

"Geis and me, we're suckers for good science fiction and fantasy art books. So I'm going to review BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS---The Art of Hannes Bok, published in limited edition by Gerry de la Ree, \$15.50, large-size, hardbound, coated paper ---a first class printing job.

I used not to like Bok's drawing. Too stiff and blocky. But this volume shows the development of his style and his mastery of techniques as the years passed. In the last few years of his life he was doing superior work.

"He died in 1964 at age 49, but his greatest "visibility" as a fantasy and sf artist was in the forties and fifties. His 1951 drawings for "Pickman's Model" by H.P. Lovecraft, and his "51 work for Austin Hall's THE SPOT OF LIFE are Bok at his Bokiest.

"De la Ree's address: 7 Cedarwood Lane, Saddle River, NJ 07458."

"Brace yourselves---I'm going to review a comic book. Yep, it's called EMPIRE, published by Berkley (in its Windover Book division) and it costs \$9.95. There is excellent full-color artwork by Howard V. Chaykin (a top professional) and a story written by that one and only literary purist, Samuel R. Delany.

"Delany wrote DAHLGREN, TRITON, THE EINSTEIN INTERSECTION, NOVA, and others. What's this pure stylist, this multiple Hugo and Nebula award winner doing scripting a book-length comic strip?

"That's for him to know. What he's done is go to your basic interstellar STAR WARS plot which in turn was your basic sf plot from the year one: good-people rebels struggling to overthrow the galaxy-wide dictatorship.

"Don't expect his usual poetic passages, his beautiful figures of speech. What you'll get is pseudo-scientific gobbledegook and one-sentence descriptions of action and/or dialogue. The pretty comic-book pictures is where it's at in

this book.

"True, Delany does show vivid imagination in creating a shape-changing spaceship and the crystalline 'demon' statue which is the key to the information-control dictatorship of the evil Künduke. But beyond that he's wrought pure formula adventure science fiction... or what I like to call magic-science fiction.

"Hell, the truth is this story is pure fantasy---magic and spells and supernatural creatures and necromancers and witches and enchantments and Good vs. Evil. All Delany has done is change the names of the story furniture."

"You might say so what? Isn't anything possible in the far future or far past? Yes, provided it's disciplined and plausible; in this effort Delany is sloppy in those areas.

"This happens to be far-future, the 61st century, with Earth spelled Eyrth, and they rebel loner is a woman named Qrelon, and the young man drawn into the struggle is named Wryn. Both are beautiful/handsome. Lots of skin-tight costumes for the females.

"I note the publisher calls this 9 x 12 book a 'visual novel'. The serious practitioners of story-telling by pictures have been seeking a more appropriate name for what they do for years. 'Comic book' doesn't make it. 'Graphic story' didn't quite fit the bill. Maybe 'visual' is the right tag.

"Maybe. But I wonder who's going to fork over ten bucks for this 116-page comic book, even if it is full-color on heavy book paper and has a stiff, glossy cover. The print run had to be small, which forces the single copy price up. Color printing is expensive as hell, and this 'visual novel' only takes an hour or less to 'read.' That leaves fanatics and rabid collectors as the buyers."

"My opinion of Robert A. Heinlein's THE NOTEBOOKS OF LAZARUS LONG [Putnam's, \$4.95] is more favorable. This is an 11 x 7 glossy-cover quality paperback consisting of the short, pithy, cynical, brutal, truthful, idealistic observations on life and the human animal by Lazarus Long, the eternal, immortal Heinlein character who occupies much of Heinlein's novels, especially METHUSELAH'S CHILDREN and TIME ENOUGH FOR LIVE. The notebooks are illuminated (medieval scribe style) by artist D. F. Vassallo.

"Some samples of Heinlein's wisdom:

Beware of altruism. It is based on self-deception, the root of all evil.

If the universe has any purpose more important than topping a woman you love and making a baby with her hearty help, I've never heard of it.

The two highest achievements of the human mind are the twin concepts of "loyalty" and "duty." Whenever these twin concepts fall into disrepute---get out of there fast! You may possibly save yourself, but it is too late to save that society. It is doomed.

In a family argument---if it turns out you are right---apologize at once!

"There are those who will not agree the above are pearls of wisdom. Tsk."

"Ordinarily I look askance at and avoid like the plague first novels. But I have to admit that Diane Duane's first sf novel, THE DOOR INTO FIRE [Dell, \$1.95] was an excellent read...in spite of the overly cute, ego-tripping 'Overture' (introduction) by David Gerrold.

"I guess you'd have to call this novel a fantasy, come to think. What I especially liked was the realism of the magic and the physical and mental cost it imposed on the magician. Too, she created a whole, coherent society, culture...it's enough to make old pros sick with envy and despair.

"The novel is nitty-gritty, uncompromising, and built on a deep understanding of human beings and our wide capacity and need for love and belonging.

Her hero's deep emotional and physical love for his male friend since boyhood, his love for the strange, alien fire elemental he saves from death, and his liking and love-capacity for women makes him not a perverted bisexual of the kinky kind, but a whole human being in a society in which the gender of a body doesn't matter: love, affection, sharing...these matter most. The rest is mere plumbing and techniques appropriate to the plumbing.

"The hero's quest and eventual triumph over his own self and adversity are of great interest, naturally, especially the narrow escape from the awful creatures from another time/galaxy/dimension which he inadvertently released from a kind of prison built by the Old Ones.

"But all the realism and detail and verisimilitude are but enhance-

ments to the...wisdom and truth Diane Duane gives in the telling of this really fine novel.

"There were a few excessively introspective, overly-long segments, but on the whole, this is a marvelous book."

"It is not my intent to like too many books, but THE MAD THIRONE by Brad Munson [Fawcett, \$1.75] is worth reading.

"It fooled me in the beginning by starting off as a contemporary novel set in the New York showbiz/theatre scene...some mentioned strange deaths of actors and actresses and other show business people...and then Connor, the star of a New York stage play, is transported, while asleep, into the body of a high class warrior/knight in a strange land---apparently an alternate Earth which is all forest and medieval and with some magic in the form of a sorcerer's apprentice---and I was abruptly into a sword & sorcery fantasy.

"Connor has trouble adjusting to all this, naturally, and nearly gets himself killed, sliced, captured by agents of the central city. The Council want him to be king, since the body he wears (and its former identity) is next in line and they're desperate because each new king goes mad in a short while and kills himself.

"Connors discovers others who have been transported from Earth-as-we-know-it to inhabit bodies in this other-Earth. One is a tough-minded young woman named Deanna Patricks who is in the lush body of a woman called Deelanarra whose friends call her Thunderthighs.

"There are aliens involved, too, called Skalds, who are telepathically linked, cold, cruel---who want to rule the City and the known world.

"So Connors and the other discovered transported ones organize a rebellion and assault the City, and...

"This is a good, detailed, realistic (cuss words, people go to bed with each other) fantasy...but I was put off by Munson's light-heartedness and coyness at times. Tongue-in-cheekiness tells the reader not to take it too seriously, it's only a tall tale. I resent that. An author undermines suspense and interest with that approach.

"Some writers are unconsciously embarrassed to be straight while writing a fantasy adventure. They can't help winking at the reader.

"Pity. Munson succumbed to that urge in this novel and the novel is flawed because of it."

AND THEN I SAW....

BY THE EDITOR

THE BLACK HOLE (PG)

is possibly the worst straight s-f movie ever made. It isn't a satire, a jape, a parody; it was made simply for pre-teen children of all ages. It is abysmal Disney juvenile junk. It will make any scientist suffer the Cringes from the first line of dialog, and will bring him to terminal Outrage within minutes. After that....

The plot is absurd, the acting is wooden, the script is wooden...

There are incredibly clumsy "cute" robots, and incredibly clumsy "police" robots, and a caricature of menace robot...evil red eye, calculated evil shape... Every angle was used to push the instinctual and culturally-implanted buttons with these robots, the "humanoid" not-men, the whirlpool black hole.

It is a mad scientist movie. It is a Moral movie so ridiculous as to do more damage to the Christian dogma of good and evil, Hell and Heaven than any film a devout Atheist could make.

This film is a terrible waste of actors, technicians, special effects...and your time and money if you see it.

The producers took our beautiful space, our spaceships, and shit in them. They used them without any understanding, any care, any ethics, any honesty, any respect.

They are pandering, ignorant, stupid, contemptible shithheads.

Do not see the movie. Do not, for God's sake, encourage them!

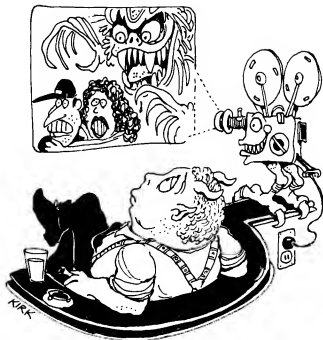
THE FOG (R)

is an average horror movie which excuses its irrationality, its sloppiness, its inconsistencies on the premise (I presume) that with ghosts bent on revenge, anything is possible, and damn the plot.

The R-rating is for the grue and violence. No sex. No nudity.

A small California coast town was founded 100 years ago by settlers who lured a ship onto the rocks with a fake signal fire, stole the ship's gold, and made sure all the crew died. A fog helped them.

So now, on the anniversary, a similar fog rolls in and the ghosts of the ship's crew rise from the



ocean (I guess) and take on solid form... (Or were they solid from the start, and simply animated, half-rotten corpses? Nothing is clearly explained...perhaps/probably to allow a lot of fast-and-loose ghostly/corporeal behavior and powers.)

The theory is six townspeople must die to make up for the six old crewmen who died in the shipwreck.

They use curved knives and cargo hooks and swords for these retributions. All at night, in the luminous fog...

There are a lot of shocks, a lot of tension, some good acting and sympathetic characters.

But the director, John Carpenter, who also made HALLOWEEN, messed up his movie with typical Hollywood philosophy: All-the-people-want-are-gore-and-shock; we-can-insult-their-intelligence-any-way-we-want-to-that-end.

SATURN 3 (R)

is a pretty good mad scientist/monster movie in sf drag. If you examine it too closely, however, it melts in your hand instead of in your mouth.

Harvey Keitel plays very well a deranged Captain in the future Earth space force who has been examined and found unstable. He kills a space pilot and escapes in a small spacer to Saturn 3, a small two-person hydroponics/food research station located on a small Saturn moon. [Do

not ask why it is located there. Its mission is to find ways to help Earth's chronic food shortage.]

Keitel has with him a new robot with a bionic brain he can program with his personality and character.

The two people already on Saturn 3 are Farrah Fawcett and Kirk Douglas. Farrah is as usual adequate, but somehow too vanilla puddingish: [It should be noted that for a split second we are treated to her naked breasts---rather bulbous and inconsistent with her skinniness, giving rise to the suspicion of implants or injections.] She is a scientist assistant and love companion to Kirk Douglas, a suitable hero and aging star in great physical condition.

The robot assembled and programmed by Keitel behaves menacingly at first, then homicidally.

Its accomplishments---major microsurgery and "mental" control of other, low-grade robots---are preposterous, but wotthehell, it makes for some scary scenes.

In the end Keitel is a victim of his creation and Kirk Douglas a sacrificial hero.

There are some fine touches in the film: the insectoid spacesuits and subtle space station design; the references to impersonal sex on Earth and a hive/socialized social structure; the forced death of citizens/workers too old; the use of various government encouraged dream pills....

But flaws: the needless humanoid shape of the robot; the incredibly dumb rings of Saturn which appear as wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling boulders through which spaceships must pass (with sounds of bumping and scraping...).

We have another sf film which was given some fine touches of authenticity and realism---and which was botched in major ways, suggesting a fine script lobotomized by ignorant producer Martin Starger and/or producer-director Stanley Donen.

It's worth seeing, but be warned; it will outrage you and delight you in different ways, sometimes at the same time.

(A thank-you to Ron Daniel who funded our expenses in seeing SATURN 3.)

BEYOND WESTWORLD (TV)

Another NBC venture into (alas) formula "sci-fi": a megalomaniac has begun to use the Westworld robot technology to attempt a takeover of the U.S.A./world. A security agent, a scientist and a pretty female assistant must foil him week after week.

Occasional good scenes and ideas in a mess of action/violence/danger.

THE ALIENS ARE COMING (TV)

But after watching this two-hour TV movie (that is definitely a lead-in for a weekly series on NBC) I wish they'd hang a left and go to Mars.

This is the old theme of an advance party of Awful Aliens landing on Earth to prepare the way for the invasion by millions/billions of their species.

They appear in their saucer craft (which is huge---a quarter mile across and maybe a quarter mile high) to be robotoid, but have the ability to become pure energy and sink into and take over a human body/mind.

A Nice Guy is taken over because he works at Hoover dam (They like all that power) and immediately begins to make people think he's Different.

A trio of Saucer investigators has tracked the descent of the monster Saucer and begins sniffing and finding....

Well, after a lot of action, danger, chase, etc. the initial objectives of the Awful Aliens are foiled, but they have their sights on a high school (previewed) for the next episode.

Flaring greenish eyes in a human mean he/she has been Taken Over and is trying to hypnotize another human.

The U.S. radar net is unable to track a monster Saucer or its city-block size local shuttle.

Somehow the aliens are able to meld all their metal and tubing into a human without any physical consequences.

Somehow nobody ever sees an Awful Alien as it journeys from its huge shuttle into a major city.

This is a QM Production, and you

should know Quinn Martin is a specialist in formula action shows with little plausibility or realism. They produce TV shows for numskulls, and THE ALIENS ARE COMING is more of the same.

THE LATHE OF HEAVEN (TV)

A very well done, faithful rendering of the Ursula K. Le Guin novel. It failed for the same reasons the novel failed. See my review of the book elsewhere in this issue.

THE CHANGELING (R)

reveals a 70-year-old murder, a terrible, petulant, childish (but effective) supernatural revenge, and an excellent performance by George C. Scott, who is the focus of the powerful forces unleashed in this story.

Scott plays a famous musician moved to Seattle after his wife and child were killed in a freak auto accident in New York. His shattered emotions and love for his dead little girl make him receptive to the supernatural presence in the old house he has leased.

These are familiar story elements, but the screenplay by William Gray and Diana Maddox is very good, and the direction by Peter Medak is excellent. Scott is utterly convincing, which makes the film come alive.

The R-rating seems to be related to the harrowing scene showing a father deliberately murdering his small son by drowning him in a tub.

The supporting cast, especially Melvyn Douglas as a U.S. Senator with a terrible secret, is excellent.

BUCK ROGERS (TV)

is the same old Juvenile as far's realism and coherence and plausibility is concerned. Junk for morons and kids.

This episode was "A 20th Century earthing (Gary Coleman), recently released from suspended animation, is being held by kidnapers on a distant planet."

Some episodes do have a modicum of sex---as various future women strut or slink in revealing costumes. But seems like almost every junk TV series nowadays has at least one comely lass wagging her ass and jiggling her jugs in a tight-fitting outfit. Low class America likes its T&A, apparently. I say this straight, without sneer. I like T&A myself.

STAR WHORES

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BY
RICHARD E. GEIS



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Toi and the Captain begin to solve the murder mystery....

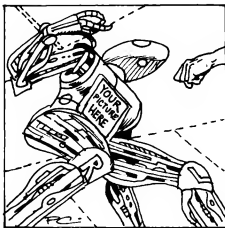
But life and sex must go on, with Toi and Senya caring for the needs of Mata's men as well as their own.

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AN INTERVIEW WITH FRED SABERHAGEN



Conducted By Neal Wilgus

SFR: Let's start off with some personal history. Since some of your books, such as *LOVE CONQUERS ALL* and *AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY* take place in Chicago, I'm jumping to the conclusion that you hail from that section of the country. How did you end up in wild and woolly Albuquerque?

SABERHAGEN: When my last nine-to-five job, writing for Encyclopaedia Britannica, folded up in Chicago, and I decided to return to science fiction full time, we looked around for a place that had all we wanted: the right size, congenial climate and so on. Albuquerque seems to come pretty close to the ideal. It keeps growing, though, and maybe someday we'll want to move on.

SFR: The two books I mentioned with the Chicago locale both end with scenes that take place on the lake front. Is this an area with some special significance to you or is it just a good location for final dramatic confrontations?

SABERHAGEN: I've spent a lot of time there. Joan and I both prefer living near impressive natural phenomena. In Chicago it was the lake, and here, of course, we have the mountains and the empty land.

SFR: How did you first get interested in science fiction and fantasy? Was there a particular book or author or magazine that got you hooked?

SABERHAGEN: Sometime in the late 1930s, at the age of seven or eight, I came across a pulp magazine (I don't remember which one, now) with a story in it that scared the daylights out of me. Again, I don't recall title or author, but it had to do with mysterious, evil spores from outer space landing on Earth and causing all kinds of difficulties. The effect on me was evidently a powerful one, because my parents forbade any more of that kind of magazine being brought into the house. Oh, well.

Then in the '40s, as a teenager, I got hooked on old *ASTOUNDINGS* at a used magazine store. But none ever had quite the effect on me of that first earlier exposure. I wish I could locate and identify that story now.

SFR: Where did the Berserkers come from?

SABERHAGEN: Out of my subconscious. I was writing a space-opera-ish story in 1961 ("To Move and Win", sometimes known as "Fortress Ship") and needed a villain, and there they were. Fred Pohl, then editor of *GALAXY*, liked them, and the readers liked them and Fred asked for more. The rest is history, or at least, as I've said elsewhere, it has been going on ever since.

SFR: The TV disaster *BATTLESTAR GALACTICA* used essentially the same idea as the Berserker series -- war with the killer machines. Do you feel this idea was stolen from your books or is it a common enough theme to be public property?

SABERHAGEN: Other writers were fighting the killer machines before I started, and I'm sure others will go on after I'm finished. I've never accused anyone of stealing the idea from me, though somehow, through garbled interviews or whatever, the suggestion seems to keep coming up.

SFR: Will there be more stories in the Berserker series? Are you working on any now?

SABERHAGEN: I'm not working on any right now, but I'd say there probably will be more. It all depends on what ideas come forward to be written. And, to some extent, on what editors ask for.

SFR: There seems to be a flood of Saberhagen books on the market now

-- why is Ace Books reissuing the old titles when you have a number of new ones just coming out?

SABERHAGEN: They must be discovering that the more of my books they issue, the more money they make.

SFR: I'm curious about the New Dracula books -- *DRACULA TAPE*, *HOLMES-DRACULA FILE* and *AN OLD FRIEND OF THE FAMILY*. Why did you switch to vampire stories after starting out with straight science fiction?

SABERHAGEN: It started with my re-reading *DRACULA*, Stoker's original book, one time just for fun. It's really not a very good book, apart from its awesome central character. What struck me very forcefully was the Count himself, though he dominates everything, is actually on stage only a very small proportion of the time. I wondered how he thought and felt about the same events that Stoker described, and what his viewpoint would be. And what he might have been doing while off-stage. So *THE DRACULA TAPE* came into being. It will probably be out in a new Ace edition, with a new cover, thank God, before this interview is printed.

SFR: With the flood of vampire stories and movies continuing to flow, do you anticipate doing another *Dracula* novel? Why are vampires so popular these days?

SABERHAGEN: I'm working on *A MATTER OF TASTE* now, and expect to have it done by the end of 1979. It's longer than any of the previous New Draculas, and goes more into the real historical background of the character. It should be out in 1980 sometime, with a big promotional push from Ace, and a cover by the same artist who does Stephen King's.

As to why vampires are so popular, I wish I knew. I'm really not fascinated with them in general. Only with the character of *Dracula*, as it seemed to me to appear between Stoker's lines.

SFR: A number of your stories feature characters who are wood carvers or sculptors -- is this one of your own hobbies or outside interests?

SABERHAGEN: No. I seem to have a lot of painters, too, but I don't draw or paint. Would like to collect art sometime, if I can come up



with a best seller or two to provide the funds.

SFR: Recently you've switched roles and become editor of A SPADEFUL OF SPACETIME, an anthology of original SF stories. Is this something you have wanted to get into for a long time?

SABERHAGEN: Yes, because there are certain ideas I wanted to pursue in theme anthologies, and Jim Baen at Ace is willing to go along with me. I think we're going to do at least one more when SPACETIME is finished, which should be soon.

SFR: As an editor do you find you have a different outlook on writing? A different philosophy of what SF is all about? What is SF all about -- do you have a definition?

SABERHAGEN: The good thing about SF is that you don't have to constrain it by definitions. Some stories, most, I guess, put my Dracula books in the science fiction section, I suppose because the rest of my books are there. Others call them Occult or Mystery. I'd like to see them in all three places, for increased sales. Apart from this practical consideration, it doesn't seem to me to matter in the least.

What is SF all about? At best, helping to define what humanity and the universe are all about.

SFR: Although I didn't find it too convincing, I was intrigued by the idea in LOVE CONQUERS ALL that conventional sexual taboos might eventually be totally reversed so that it's "obscene" to act chastely. Do you think such a reversal will ever come about? Should it?

SABERHAGEN: No, I don't think it really will or that it should. I was just using the old science fiction technique of turning something inside out to see how it looked that way.

SFR: You've used cosmological magic such as the Taj in *BERSERKER MAN* or the black hole/pulsar system in

VEILS OF AZLAROC to circumvent the laws of physics as presently understood. At what point does this kind of science-magic become so implausible as to lose the reader's credibility? Do you think such "violations" of physical law will someday be found to actually exist?

SABERHAGEN: I think that present day astronomers, physicists and cosmologists, brilliant though they are, have a long way to go before understanding the universal physical laws. Quarks, mysteriously doubled quasars, missing neutrinos -- really it's a sign of scientific progress. We have advanced far enough to now understand that we understand almost nothing. Every time we get a good look, for the first time, at some quasi-familiar object in our own solar system, through an unmanned probe, the results are surprising. I obviously don't know what's at the galactic core. But I'd be willing to bet it will prove every bit as outre as the Taj.

SFR: In your science fantasy trilogy, *EMPIRE OF THE EAST*, magic and science sort of take turns running things. What's the difference between this kind of fantasy-magic and the "black hole magic" of a science fiction story like *VEILS OF AZLAROC*?

SABERHAGEN: Black holes are now generally accepted by scientists, though not demonstrable on Earth, at least not so far. I would be very skeptical about anyone's claim to demonstrate real magic. But black holes and magic could have existed on the Earth in the past, or may come to it in the future. Larry Niven's *THE MAGIC GOES AWAY* could be closer to reality than we think.

I think my point is really that, even though spectroscopy indicates that atoms in far-distant galaxies are behaving much like atoms on earth, we are not justified in assuming that all physical laws are immutable through the whole universe of space and time. (Really, I'm still working on the question before this one.)



SFR: I noticed that the ending of *ARADNEH'S WORLD*, the third volume in the *EMPIRE OF THE EAST* trilogy, is somewhat revised from the original when the novel appeared separately as *CHANGELING EARTH*. How extensively were the three novels rewritten when they became one volume?

SABERHAGEN: Quite a lot was done, in key places, particularly the ending. The three books were originally written at well-separated times, and when I began the first I had no idea at all of how the third was going to end, or even of who Aradneh was. I welcomed the chance to redo some things, and this is the definitive version as far as I'm concerned.

SFR: To my mind *EMPIRE OF THE EAST* is your best work yet -- though I haven't yet read *THE MASK OF THE SUN*. Do you think you'll ever do a follow-up to *EMPIRE* -- perhaps another Rolf trilogy? Or are you off already on a different track altogether?

SABERHAGEN: Thanks. If *EMPIRE* sells a million copies I'm sure I could be persuaded. Or at least I probably could. Actually, I feel tired of that world now, having been through it so many times. Right now, I'm excited about *A MATTER OF TASTE*, which I mentioned earlier. And when that's finished, something called *OCTAGON*, which will be a very different track indeed. More than that I don't want to say right now.

SFR: Is there a "message" in your work? Are the Berserkers a warning -- or just entertainment?

SABERHAGEN: I hope that all my work is entertainment, to begin with. If it is that, then I can start hoping that it's something more. That my robots and vampires and strange worlds will help define what it means to be an Earth-creature, what it really means to be a human being.

SFR: Thank you, Mr. Saberhagen.

NOISE LEVEL

a column

john brunner

WHAT WAS THAT ABOUT ENGLAND'S
GREEN UNPLEASANT LAND?

Reading the Season reports which have come my way -- above all, Charlie Brown's remarks on the cost of living over here, of which Malcolm Edwards correctly observed, "Charlie, they saw you coming!" -- it occurs to me that probably very few Americans have any clear idea of what life is like in Britain, not in a big city (cities are much the same everywhere I've been) but in the sort of place where I live; a country village.

Mark you, ours is a bit exceptional. Or we like to think so.

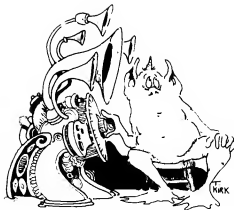
Here then is a paean of praise for South Petherton, Somerset.

Our very first visitors from abroad on our arrival here were a young American poet and his girl friend whom we'd met at the Living Arts Centre in Dayton, Ohio. I took them from our home, which is chiefly the servants' quarters of what must have been a rather fine Victorian mansion, built of local stone, via the "scenic route" along our own street, up George Lane which is fringed with traditional cottage gardens, and whose name commemorates the fact that there was once another pub where the chemist's shop (drugstore) stands, under a brick archway into the main square where markets were already being held in the reign of King John (died 1216), past the church -- there was a church on the site when William the Conqueror sent out his clerks to compile the Domesday Book in 1087 -- and down the stone steps which lead into the main street.

They got there, and stood shaking their heads. The guy said, "I didn't know people still lived in places like this! It's like walking into a stage-set!"

When I'd pointed out the range of shops, he asked what the population was. I'd inquired at the post office and was able to tell him: under 3000.

To which he replied, "A town this size in Ohio would have maybe a gas station."



So then I took them to the Manor House, which is a fine example of a fifteenth-century Great House, though much modified and with several additions. It's popularly known as "King Ina's Palace" after the great law-giver of the South Saxons who held his court here in 693.

(That's right: not 1693 -- 693. At the later date they were probably still moaning about how Judge Jeffries came here during the Bloody Assizes which followed the Monmouth Rebellion and ordered three men hanged from a beam which you can see across a garage entrance in the main street. You mean you didn't know we had a Civil War two centuries before yours?)

Report has it that a Roman villa was once found within the confines of the parish. Unfortunately they forgot where it was again.

But if you go down North Street (the continuation of which is called Droveaway, because our village was a stopping-place for the herds and flocks which used to be driven on the hoof from the West Country to the London market) and look to your right, you will see terraces on the hillside which testify certainly to Saxon, and very possibly to Neolithic, farming here.

All of which impressed our guests so much that I've done roughly the same tour with most of our subsequent visitors, including three Chinese whom we invited in the spring of '79.

Who were chiefly struck by how empty the countryside is, compared with China ...

Goods and services? Anything you could reasonably want right now, up to and including a car or a colour TV, can be obtained within a mile of my front door. I must make a minor exception for heavy consumer durables like washing machines

and dish washers; we have no stockists in the village, but we have agencies that can get them for you, or you can take a Safeways bus to Yeovil, ten miles away, and make your selection. Safeways is a village firm, of course. That apart:

Want a house built? (We're in a conservation area, so it will have to be of stone or "reconstructed stone", to match existing buildings.) At least three firms will quote for it, and a village firm will do the earth-moving, too. Want an old one re-wired? Mr. Gandy, in North Street, will attend to it. Or re-plumbed and fitted with central heating? See Mr. Beale in Coles Lane. Want to furnish it and fit it out with carpets and curtains? Ask Mr. Cornelius in St. James Street.

Need a loan to pay for that lot? The National Westminster Bank, one of Britain's Big Four, has a branch opposite the square.

Men's wear? Two shops in the main street. Women's clothing? Two again, plus a third if your taste extends to the ethnic look, because then you're talking about that very remarkable place Global Village Crafts, the bow-windowed shop on whose stone door-post a carefully-restored sign still says, "Licensed to sell Tea, Coffee, Tobacco and Snuff, 1842". Brainchild of a Methodist minister who used to work for relief agencies in the Third World, it deals in hand-made goods of every kind, preferably from co-operatives in under-developed countries, and the profits are ploughed back into the firm upstairs: Rural Communications Ltd., publishers of an "appropriate technology" magazine called BASICS.

Hungry? Well, apart from three grocery stores you get your milk and bread delivered if you want, and a fishmonger comes by with his van on Thursdays. (Last night I served moules a la marinière for supper.) Also there is a fish-and-chip shop and three restaurants, one of which is of international standard, boasting the AA rosette, and another (our favourite).

A neighbourhood restaurant of the kind to be found all over France, but rare in Britain.

Wholefoods? At the greengrocer's in the square, along with their locally-grown vegetables and lots of imports. Medical care? Four doctors in a group practice under the National Health Service, plus the wife of one of them who is a gynaecologist, cover this village and another 2 1/2 miles away, alternating between two surgeries. There's also a hospital, though

mainly for geriatric cases. The pharmacy is on the main square.

Trouble with the law? Constable Parker lives near Mr. Gandy the electrician. The lawyers' office is almost opposite the doctors' house, where a sign says "Under-Sheriff's Office for the County of Somerset". Post office? Next door to the service station. Churches? There are four: C. of E., Catholic, Methodist and United Reformed. Public toilets? In the square, at Blake Hall where the parish council meets and most public functions are held; the ladies' is next to the public library and the gents' next to the sports and social club.

The Crown is an old coaching-inn, and still has the yard where coaches could unload under cover (its ballroom is built out over it). Across the way the Bell was also a coaching-inn, and during our annual Folk Festival -- held on the weekend nearest to Midsummer Day to commemorate the fair granted more than 750 years ago which I mentioned earlier -- it acts as a centre for the song side of events. That's also where the weekly folk-song club meets, in the room above the skittle alley.

Behind the Crown is a wall standing by itself. I showed it to a friend from Paris and asked what it was; most people have no idea. He said immediately, "C'est un fronton de pelote." He'd been to the Basque country and seen pelota, or jai alai as it's better known in the States. Seems that in the late Middle Ages it was regarded as a proper pastime for novice monks. So that wall must have been there for -- oh -- half a millennium? Nowadays most people call it a Fives tower, but you still sometimes hear the term "pallottly wall".

The village carnival takes place in September. If you can't wait that long, pop up to the Combined Arts Centre near the cemetery (Oh, yes, you can get buried here too -- the undertakers double as one of the local building firms) and inquire about the Choral Society, or the Dramatics Group, or the Local History Society, or the folk-dance club, or ...

Plus, of course, all the sporting events, from skittles and darts to cricket and football, not to mention angling in the nearby River Parrett from which by peculiar metathesis the village derived its name. Next on the menu, as I write, are the Shrove Tuesday pancake races.

When those Chinese were here, we took them to see village politics

in action at a meeting to protest about a new and unnecessary road across the area. One of the speakers was the Liberal parliamentary candidate for the constituency. After the meeting he came over and addressed our visitors in flawless Mandarin.

It isn't everywhere in the world you can have that happen, is it?

ALIEN THOUGHTS CONTINUED FROM P. 5

for, know approximately when it will be on sale, and know they'll like it and buy it.

The overwhelming support of the magazine comes from subscribers, and a cover that shouts at passersby only irritates them. It does me, anyway.

So this issue I'm returning to the uncluttered cover format of yore. In fact, even more pristine and non-commercial than ever before, with only the issue number and price.

In future issues I may be able to make other improvements.

The policy of no advertising (except a few ads for other publishing efforts) will continue. In fact, after CANNED MEAT and STAR WHORES sell out the only ad might be for my personal journal...and I might not even push that!

Why? I want to focus all my reading and writing time on SFR, and I want a professional-quality but no-hype, non-commercial format and image.

Those small press sf and fantasy mags which have had high percentages of page totals in ads are now in serious trouble because the big publishers are cutting back on advertising. Andy Porter has had to cut STARSHIP's pages way back, for instance, and other, less secure (financially) magazines will face losses and some will cease publication. When you live by ads, you die for lack of them. I've kept SFR out of that

trap partly because I saw this recession coming, but mostly because I'm not comfortable with that kind of commercial operation.

HUGO...WHEREFORE ART THOU, HUGO?

I have in my hot, trembling hands two announcements/letters from George Flynn (in charge of Hugo voting) which tell me SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW has been nominated for the Science Fiction Achievement Award (commonly called the Hugo Award) for Best Fanzine of 1979.

And that I, Richard E. Geis, have been nominated for the Best Fan Writer Award for 1979.

There are five nominees in each category, and the winner (after a final ballot) will be announced at the Awards Ceremony at the World Science Fiction Convention to be held (this year) in Boston. The convention this year is called Noreascon Two and is the 38th world science fiction convention.

The ceremony will be in Hynes Auditorium on the evening of Sunday, August 31st.

YAN#H0000000!!!!!!
Thanks to all those members of Noreascon Two who nominated me and SFR.

BLOOD AND GOR

Rory Coker of Austin, Texas, sent along a long newspaper story about the young man whose defense on a murder charge was that his reading of the Gor books influenced him to act out his fantasies.

I'll quote the story from the December 1, 1979 AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN. Then I'll have a comment.

'Strangulation defendant fantasized tying up girls

By John Sutton

'In a barely audible voice Fri-



day, Robert (Terry) Terhune--on trial for the choking death of his 16-year-old neighbor--testified he often fantasized about tying up neighborhood teen-age girls so he could "dominate" them like the hero of a series of sexually explicit science fiction books he was fond of reading.

The 22-year-old former University of Texas architecture student is on trial for murder in 126th State District Court for the March 30 stabbing and strangulation death of Paula Ashbaugh, an Anderson High School sophomore.

Terhune described the science fiction series in which the main character chronicles his adventures on the male-dominated world of Gor.

"On Gor, 'There are many female slaves. It is very strong on bondage,'" he said, describing the series as sexually explicit and sexually arousing.

He said he had gotten in the habit of reading the books before going to bed at night, and then before he would fall asleep, he fantasized about "tying up women, not so much for sexuality, but for the dominance. Sometimes it would be women in the books, or women I had known...neighborhood girls, possibly Paula.

"I feel people have fantasies, some more bizarre than others," he said. Terhune said his fantasies did not include violence, but added, "Tying someone up wouldn't seem to me to be hurting anyone."

He said he fantasized about tying up women the night before Ashbaugh was slain.

During the five hours Terhune was on the stand, he described sensations he recalled on the morning the teen-ager was choked to death with a rope and her body was stabbed 35 times.

Terhune, who said he had been under pressure at school, said he didn't remember waking up that morning last spring.

"The first thing I remember was walking---seeing my feet walking. It was like walking on a cloud or in a fog."

He said he didn't know where he was going, or why he went to the Ashbaugh house, six houses down from his, where his best friend's sister still slept. "I wouldn't have known at that time it was the Ashbaughs'."

"Somebody was there and the door opened," he said. "I assumed it was Paula, but at that time I didn't know who it was. It was like a mannequin's face. It was there, but I couldn't recognize the features."

"I remember being behind her," Terhune told the jury. "She was sitting down or bending over and I remember the rope. It was in front of my face---a white robe before a black background. I remember her

choking, remembering seeing hands in front of my face---hers, I guess. It was like I wasn't in that room anymore. I just remember seeing hands."

"Then there was a knife, I remember. I remember hearing that dog barking. I don't remember any sound except that dog barking, barking. I remember she (Paula) was being sad. I didn't want to watch what I was watching. It wasn't like I was doing it. It was like watching and not being able to stop watching," he said.

Terhune said he remembered "seeing blood and trying to stop the blood" and remembered running from the house. "I just ran. I didn't know what happened. I couldn't understand it. I panicked. I was running. I was not thinking."

Terhune said he could not believe that he had done anything.

"Afterward at his own house, Terhune testified, "I was in a state of shock. I didn't know what to do...I remember just being sick. I remember I took those clothes off, took a shower. I felt dirty. I got dressed, and had those clothes there is a pile. They were just arguing with me. My mind was arguing back and forth. I had to get them away. They were disturbing me."

He drove a friend to classes at UT and then motored out to West Lake Hills to bury the clothes and rope in a rubbish pile.

Terhune said he was under increasing pressure at school and was distraught over the thought that he would not be able to fulfill his lifelong desire of becoming a Navy pilot because he often became air-sick when he flew.

His defense lawyers contend he was temporarily insane at the time of the killing, and police and district attorney investigators already have testified that when he was questioned he spoke of a third person and said "the other guy" killed Paula Ashbaugh.

Terhune's psychiatrist, Dr. Richard Alexander, said during the 56 hours of examination conducted in 84 visits his patient's story stayed consistent.

Alexander said Terhune had experienced an early trauma in his life when his father died of a heart attack March 24, 1971---almost exactly the same time of year as the slaying of the Ashbaughs.

Terhune had been alone at home with his father when he found him after he had suffered what would be a fatal heart attack. "He felt guilt because of that," Alexander said.

The psychiatrist said he had administered a "truth drug," sodium amytal, to Terhune to determine if the man really committed the crime.

COMMENT

I suppose in years to come censures or types will point to this case as an example of "homography" triggering a young man to murder. Inflamed by the lurid prose... It will be made to appear that he was the helpless, innocent victim...a disturbed boy who might not have killed but for the existence and easy availability of this vile literature.

That's bullshit. You might as well condemn and proscribe the Navy literature which tempted him to want to become a pilot.

Or the social/cultural pressures which shaped his need to succeed so desperately.

And make sure no child/boy or girl in the future is exposed to the trauma of a parent's death---up close.

Robert Terhune broke under pressure---obviously---and a symptom of his cracking was his choice of reading material. Now, nothing is said in this story about his psychosexual development. Was he popular with girls? Was he a virgin? Was he a socially awkward jerk who rarely dated?

As I interpret and deduce from this story, he couldn't stand the strains and his subconscious (ego-id) shorted out his surface self and found a desperate way out. A solution to his problems which will last a lifetime. Now he doesn't have to worry about a Navy pilot career, about graduating, about a job, about relationships with girls. That's all settled now. He's free. I'll bet on a deep level he can't admit, he's happy. Strangely content. Especially if he blamed himself for his dad's death, somehow.

The Gor book Terhune read didn't trigger him, or cause that murder. Nor did the political reading material of Sirhan Sirhan cause or trigger him to assassinate Robert Kennedy. [If you buy the Gor books as censorable, better gear up to get all political and religious writings as well, for starters.]

I think we are all predisposed to "buy" certain ideas, fictions, opinions from the spectrum of human thought by our genes, our body chemistry and our environment. Body chemistry and environment changes---and so too, sometimes, do our opinions and entertainment needs. Ask an old man if he thinks the same way he did when he was twenty.

I don't.

Yes, it's humiliating to the ego, the "I", to admit that so much of our thought and character and personality are governed by hormones, drugs (natural in the body--or otherwise) and accidental life experiences, but there it is. Buy it or deny it.

THE VIVISECTOR

BY DARRELL SCHWEITZER

ROADMARKS

By Roger Zelazny
Del Rey/Ballentine, 1979
Hardcover, 185 pp., \$8.95

This is a throwaway novel, I'm sorry to report. It reminds me of a half a dozen Philip Jose Farmer books in which brilliant ideas are presented, then left underdeveloped, trivialized, or just cast aside in pursuit of an irrelevant plot. (e.g. DARE) In this case, the central premise is one of those outrageously literalized metaphors which only work in science fiction and fantasy. In mainstream they'd be gibberish. Consider a "road through time". Zelazny's Road, which may have been built by dragons, runs from the far past to the far future. It is built in the manner of a 20th Century superhighway, complete with exit ramps, rest stops, gas stations, etc. The hero drives a pickup truck. With discipline and imagination, there's no limit to what a first rate author like Zelazny could have done with it.

Unfortunately he does damn little. There are two narratives, the main one (chapters labelled "One") and a subsidiary, out-of-sequence one ("Two"). In the first, our hero spends most of his time avoiding assassins and questing after a vaguely defined Something. In the second, his son finds out who his father was and goes after him, and various persons (and things) are recruited from various times and places to join in the mele. Frequently a lot of attention is devoted to characters whose roles are quite trivial, and often they're interesting characters, e.g., the Chinese monk whose prior personality as a super-competent killer from the future is slowly returning. (There's a novel in him.) When the hero finally meets the guy who is causing all the trouble, the villain's motivations are glossed over before they make a bit of sense. When the son and father meet, little happens to justify the space devoted to this "subplot". There are several dues-ex-machinas all at once and one dragon-out-of-a-hat. The problems tend to solve themselves and most of the interesting questions are never resolved. As a result the best parts of the book tend to pull it apart. Something which

looks interesting, develops a little ways then is abandoned, can only be distracting.

ROADMARKS is, alas, second-rate Zelazny. It's failings are failings of storytelling and very serious ones. Now, I'm not one of those people who insist that Zelazny "lost it" ten years ago. After the work which established his reputation in the late 1960s, he shifted gears. He was writing in top form as recently as "Home is the Hangman" and DOORWAYS IN THE SAND, even if it was a different form. But this new novel is just sloppy. It shows signs of haste and a lack of application. One hopes he will do a sequel in which he will make effective use of the marvellous potential inherent in the premise.

DESTINATION MOON

By Robert A. Heinlein
Ed. D.G. Hartwell, Gregg Press
1979, unpaginated, Hardcover, \$15.00

Here's something for the collectors. Strictly speaking, this is a Heinlein first edition, and it has a very low print run, as all Gregg Press editions do, since they are aimed at libraries. It contains the uncollected novella based on the film of the same title, which was published in SHORT STORIES in 1950 and reprinted in a Leo Margulies anthology, THREE TIMES INFINITY, in 1958 (the Gregg printing is a facsimile of the latter); plus Heinlein's article "Shooting Destination Moon," from ASTOUNDING, July 1950 (facsimile of the magazine pages); and a facsimile of a publicity booklet brought out at the time.

The whole thing, as Hartwell points out in his introduction, is a milestone in the history of both science fiction cinema and the evolution of mankind's ideas about space travel, but it is a milestone which has long since been passed. The whole emphasis then was on selling people on the idea, making them understand the concept and accept the possibility of a flight to the moon. (The booklet uses the word "inevitability", and even predicts

a space race for military reasons.) The novella is a period piece, as dated as Jules Verne, and comprehensible only if one thinks of it as a story about spaceflight in 1950. Aside from the nuclear space drive, it's all 1950 technology. The pilot has to call a local university and get time on their huge computer to have his trajectory calculated. The political atmosphere is very much that of the early Cold War.

Even though some of the gross stupidities of the film, such as the greased antenna episode, are eliminated, the story (which differs considerably from the final script) still suffers from what I call the "amateur astronaut syndrome", as most pre-spaceflight science fiction does. We are asked to believe the first flight to the moon will take off in a hurry, dragging an extra crew member at the last minute, and then arrive without any prior thought being given to a landing site. At the same time many of the things the characters do are only believable if they are amateurs.

The particulars of the story differ considerably from the actual film. As the article reveals, Heinlein had to battle with the same type of "the public can't tell the difference" Hollywood mentality in 1950 that exists today, and he was apparently more successful than many who have come after him. What var-



ious people tried to do to the film is sickening. (A musical comedy writer brought in. Songs. Gaiety. Sex ...)

As a reading experience, the novella is minor Heinlein, though enjoyable, and it does serve as a reminder of how good Heinlein was before he laid his literary abilities aside and took up writing bloated tracts. The book is an important historical item. Anybody teaching a course in SF should put a copy on reserve.

SPIRITS, STARS AND SPELLS

By L. Sprague de Camp and Catherine C. de Camp

Pub. by Canaveral Press, 1966

Available from Owlswick Press

Box 8243, Philadelphia, PA 19101

\$17.00

This book has been lingering in a nearly out-of-print state for years, not widely distributed or listed in catalogues, but available from Canaveral Press, if one happened to know about it. Now Owlswick Press has taken over the remaining stock. Collectors should note that the Owlswick distributed copies will have a new dustjacket.

SPIRITS, STARS AND SPELLS is a lively, immensely readable history of magical belief through the ages. Because of the broad range of material covered, it isn't quite successful as a debunking book, despite the fact that the authors take every opportunity to expose magic as fraud and delusion. A superstitious person is more likely to call the de Camps liars (or perhaps demonically possessed agents of error) than be converted to scientific rationalism. There just isn't enough room for a thorough demolition on the order of Martin Gardner's *FAIDS AND FALLACIES IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE* (still the best Crankology text available), although the chapters on Theosophy and Spiritualism come close. As an outline of what types of magic have been practised at various times and how they evolved, it is excellent. The only fault I find is that the authors enormously underestimate the influence of Aleister Crowley, whose "magic" is still very widely practised and whose Order of the Golden Dawn apparently forms the basis of much contemporary witchcraft. (I am told that Scientology has incorporated much Golden Dawn material.) The statement that Crowleyism died when John W. Parsons blew himself up shortly after World War II is simply wrong.

Which brings us to:

NECRONOMICON
Edited and with an introduction
by "Simon".
Avon, 1980, 218 pp., \$2.75

Yet another case of reality outstripping fiction. Some years ago I attempted to put the Cthulhu Mythos out of its misery with a tale called "The Last Horror Out of Arkham", in which the Old Ones win and the world is destroyed because a mad Arkhamite made NECRONOMICONs so easily available that everybody had one and inevitably somebody uttered the Wrong Words. At one point the characters discussed publishing it in mass market paperback, but decided against it on the grounds such an edition would never be believable.

Exactly.

As far as I can tell, the NECRONOMICON has had a remarkably long printing history for a non-existent book. There have been at least 4 books under that title published:



1) A small, privately printed text discovered in New York in the 1940s. It contained all passages quoted in stories published up to that time. (Rumor has it there was a Cthulhu cult in that city. Well, the Shaver Mystery was going full blast then, so why not?)

2) AL ASIF, published by Owlswick Press in the 1970s. This consisted of lots of fake calligraphy and repeating signatures. AL AZIF is the original Arabic title. NECRONOMICON is Greek.

3) A more recent, deluxe leather-bound volume published by an occultist who, so I am told, didn't know much about Lovecraft or the

Mythos and filled it with standard occultism.

4) The George Hay book of the same title, which is actually a collection of articles on the subject.

This present one may be a new work or else a reprint of NECRONOMICON #3. It is certainly filled with standard occultism, mostly derived from Crowley. In fact, our editor, who has risked grave peril because of his dedication to "unspeakable horrors" tries to convince us that the Mythos is true, derived from ancient Sumerian lore, and remarkably similar to Crowley's ritual magic. (Excuse me, Magic.) Curiously, he seems to know very little about Lovecraft and his ideas on the Mythos are very Derlethian -- you know, the Mythos as a Christian analog, the struggle between Good and Evil, etc. etc., all of which is completely alien to what Lovecraft wrote.

Next someone will doubtless produce a tome from Robert E. Howard's Hyborian Age and pass it off as fact. If only one person in a thousand is stupid enough to believe, well, the United States has a population of 210 million ... Then there are the dread P'knosed Manuscripts, which predate the invention of the handkerchief

Really, H.P.L. would not have approved. Claiming this thing is the work mentioned in the stories, (even though none of the passages which occur in Lovecraft, including the famous couplet, appear in it) despite Lovecraft's denials of its existence, is carrying a hoax well beyond the bounds of good taste and responsibility.

When we're told that the name "Miskatonic" has ancient Sumerian roots, and is other than a fake New England Indian name, I am tempted to invoke the Wisdom of the Ancients, specifically something muttered by a priest of Mithra in 210 A.D. when he found himself uncomfortably at the arse-end of a bovine sacrifice:
*B*U*U*L *** *S*H*I*T*

THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA
Edited by Peter Nichols
Doubleday, 1979, 672 pp.
Hardcover, \$25.00; paper \$12.95

This is probably the most useful SF reference work yet compiled. The only thing comparable to it is the Tuck ENCYCLOPEDIA, which is better bibliographically, but not in most other ways. Nichols' book is admirably broad in its scope, covering a wide variety of authors outside the American/British commercial

GETTING SOAP TO
FLOAT IN BURNING
BRIMSTONE IS A
LITTLE TRICKY.



genre. There are also entries for magazines which usefully tell how many issues were published and untangle title changes, multiple uses of titles, and so on; for nearly a hundred SF movies, and for various themes and topics (Paranoia, alternate worlds, space opera, etc.).

It makes fascinating reading. Ultimately you'll have to read it cover to cover, because every time you go to look something up you'll find yourself caught up in some other entry, then another, and another, for hours. The writing is lucid, the content critical but well balanced and generally fair. I found remarkably few errors. (e.g. we are repeatedly told Manly Wade Wellman wrote DR. CYCLOPS.) Coverage of early and obscure pulp writers is sometimes sketchy: Francis Flagg and Ed Earl Repp are included but, for example, Jane Rice, Frederic Arnold Kummer Jr., and Claire Wingler Harris are not. (Harris should have been mentioned in the Women in SF article.) Since this is supposed to be a science fiction work, fantasy intrudes only sporadically, leading to some odd omissions: THE ARKHAM SAMPLER listed, but not THE ARKHAM COLLECTOR; FANTASY TALES listed but not WHISPERS or WEIRDOBOOK.

The only thing I really take exception to is the suggestion that Dr. Paul Linebarger ("Cordwainer Smith") might have been the nutty "Kirk Allen" of Robert Lindner's "The Jet-Propelled Couch". (Which was a psychiatric article about a patient living in a space opera fantasy and losing touch with reality.) I'm sure Mrs. Linebarger could demolish this more thoroughly than I, but I don't see the similarities in background. Besides, the literary evidence doesn't fit. The patient became fascinated by seeing his name in books, first in the works of a "stylist of the 1920s" and later in a series of interplanetary adventures which were available in book form in the 20s and/or 30s. I submit that the stylist was James Branch

Cabell, the first coincidence was "John Charteris" in BEYOND LIFE and that the space opera series was by Edgar Rice Burroughs, unless of course someone can dig up a "Paul Linebarger of Mars" saga. (You'll find a dozen John Carters in any phone book.)

THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA is highly recommended. Open it to any page at random and you'll probably learn something you didn't previously know. It's worth getting in hardcover, particularly since the huge, unwieldy paperback will surely pull itself apart in a short while.

SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY LITERATURE

Compiled by Robert Reginald
Gale Research Company, 2 volumes.
1141 pp., \$64.00

Another excellent reference work, although this one nobody will read cover to cover. It's a bibliography of science fiction and fantasy in book form published between 1700 and 1974, and is a must for any library, serious collector or dealer. It has been researched thoroughly. Reginald has examined 95% of the books himself. The second volume consists of data on the authors, gathered by mailing out questionnaires. Some of these give only essential facts (birth date, awards, etc.) but others have long commentaries (e.g. Moskowitz, Tip-tree) which amount to original autobiographical essays.

Mistakes are few. Lord Dunsany's IF I WERE DICTATOR is listed as a novel when it is really non-fiction. I found one book which was omitted. (THE WITCH OF RAMOTH by Mark Van Doren. I'm sure there are others. Some are read them; e.g. I believe John Dickson Carr's THE BURNING COURT is fantasy.) Reginald includes any collection which contains at least one-third fantasy material. This leads to some curious situations: Hale's THE BRICK MOON is listed only in a 1971 separate printing because the other stories in the collection are mainstream. Jorge Luis Borges is not included at all. I asked why and was told that most of his work is "surrealism" and not really fantasy. Definitions differ, but I would have included LABYRINTHUS, FICCIONES and THE ALEPH at least.

This will doubtless be a standard work for years to come. It's the place to start when researching an author.

BRIEFLY NOTED:

Gregg Press reprints of Roger Zelazny: DAMNATION ALLEY, 157 pp. \$10.00. NINE PRINCES IN AMBER, 188 pp. \$15.00. LORD OF LIGHT, 257 pp., \$14.00

These three books are a bit too well known to be reviewed in detail here. (I actually got four: The other one, BRIDGE OF ASHES, isn't and will be.) All have been out of print in hardcover for some time and have been known to fetch fabulous prices. (\$50 for NINE PRINCES, for example.) This particular batch of reprints is intended for libraries, but also for intensely interested individuals. If you are a Zelazny fan, these are the editions to get. They are akin to the Gregg Press editions of Fritz Leiber's Grey Mouser series in that they lack the usual introductions but have uniform dustjackets. The jackets this time are by Freff and are quite attractive, as are the interior illustrations. These are the first Gregg editions to have specifically commissioned interior artwork, rather than just whatever happened to be picked up in the facsimile printings. DAMNATION ALLEY (which is the slightly less successful longer version of the Hugo-nominated novella of the same title) also has stills, from the unfortunate movie of the same title which occasionally bore slight resemblance to the book. (Question: Why doesn't somebody reprint the original novella? Alas, that 12 years ago they didn't have short books padded with illos, like Niven's THE MAGIC GOES AWAY. Then Zelazny wouldn't have had to pad the thing.)

ADDENDUM Postcard 3-31-80

There is another NECRONOMICON, the art book by H.R. Giger. Actually Giger's is probably the closest to the impact of the alleged original.



AN INTERVIEW WITH DONALD WOLLHEIM

PART TWO

GEIS NOTE: This wasn't supposed to be PART TWO. What happened was I mistakenly slipped part of Don's interview into the wrong folder...and didn't notice the missing questions and answers when I pasted up #34.

When Don wrote and asked what had happened I was thunderstruck. I found the missing Q's and A's, of course---they appear below---but I have a sore spot between the eyes where I smote my forehead, and my ears still ring from my initial cry of anguish.

SFR: You've published many of the GOR books, which most hardcore SF fans consider sexist, male chauvinist, even fascist trash which is designed to appeal to the reader's worst emotional weakness. What do you think of those assessments and arguments? Does fiction have a social consciousness burden to bear...or is fiction simply entertainment and not to be saddled with a higher purpose?

WOLLHEIM: The GOR novels originated in the offices of Ballantine Books and the first seven, in which are all the elements that distinguish these novels, are still published by Ballantine under the Del Rey imprint. More, they have all been reissued recently with new cover art designed to emphasize the lubricious and bondage elements of those novels and to underplay the adventure and science fiction elements. Topping that off, Ballantine Books has also bought for American sale a series of sleazy "slave trader" novels hacked out by an English writer against a background of Ancient Rome. These junky novels have been repackaged for U.S. sale with equally salacious covers by Boris Vallejo to match his new GOR covers. Both sets of books are being marketed together in one bookshop "dump-in" display.

Does science fiction have a social consciousness burden to bear? Ask that of Mrs. Del Rey. I say, yes to a certain extent, but science fiction is primarily escapist fantasy fiction. In this day and age when mainstream bestsellers like SCRIPLES and ACTS OF LOVE sell in the millions of copies and are indistinguishable in any way from the under-the-counter hardcore pornography of fifteen years ago, what are social ethics against financial returns?

As for the GOR books, since we started publishing them -- and we do them unedited and unabridged -- I have read innumerable letters and heard many comments from readers and I can state that those "hardcore SF fans" who dislike them, according to your question, are outnumbered more than ten to one by readers who find in John Norman's novels exactly what pleases their imaginations and makes daily life more bearable. I can say that it was an education to me also, because I know now that at least half of the GOR readers are women, often married women, and that the bondage fantasies that are part of the background of the imaginary planet Gor, are genuine psychological relief medicine to millions of people of both sexes.

All right, perhaps this is not the way that ideal people should be. But this is an imperfect world and people lead distorted and frustrated lives. If our publication of these novels alleviates this, I am not sorry that we are the vehicle for them. I do not myself seek out imitations and writers of this nature. John Norman is sufficient -- he is sincere and the master. And as a certain Jewish Carpenter is reporter to have remarked, "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone".

SFR: Does your personal optimism about mankind's future guide your selection of books to publish? I know you published Mark Geston's THE DAY STAR, an extension of his



nihilistic, depressing view of the fate of man; were you editor of Ace when his LORIS OF THE STARSHIP and OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE DRAGON were selected? Are there any taboos in DAW's publishing guidelines?

WOLLHEIM: Obviously, my optimism must have an effect but not consciously. My concern when reading a novel is whether it holds my interest, is intriguing, is enjoyable. Regardless of what potential future the author may depict, those are my only criteria. I enjoyed Mark Geston's novels for their color, for their originality, and for the integrity of his viewpoint. Enjoying them, I therefore accepted them for publication.

I do not believe that a publisher of escapist literature -- which is what science fiction is -- has the right to partisanship. In general, the freedom of the press in a nation like the USA is guaranteed only by the insistence of editors and publishers on considering a work solely on the basis of whether it will sell, whether there is a valid audience for it. On this basis American book publishers have a good record -- they have published and continue to publish many works of a frankly partisan or unorthodox economic, political and sexual nature which differ from the private views of the publisher himself. As long as this is the general standard, there will be a free press here. True, there are, have been,

CONDUCTED BY RICHARD E. GEIS

and will be abuses of this. Publishers are human beings and individuals. Overall, I think that my own opinions do not blind me to the virtues of someone else's projections of futurity.

Nonetheless, I do feel that there are some subjects which turn readers off -- and first of all is the depiction of a near-future in which devastation, misery, war and famine are too vividly depicted. The future may hold such catastrophes, but I do not believe that readers of escapist fantasy want to have their noses rubbed into such concepts very often. If a novel, however well-written, turns me off like that, I would rather not publish it. I think it would transmit to readers a damp blanket on their sense of wonder and desire to dream of a greater future. I respect the talents of such writers as Tom Disch and J.G. Ballard but I can't see why anyone not a masochist would want to read them. I certainly do not. Mark Geston, on the other hand, fascinated me by the discovery of such grim conjectures in a young person of his age (during the Sixties, you will understand), but conveyed without the grimmer aspects of realism a Tom Disch would have contrived.

Taboos? I guess that is about it. I try to go along allowing the greatest liberty on other matters, knowing that the generation of young people today is far less regimented in all attitudes than that of my own youth.

SFR: Do you have any thoughts on the current energy shortage (or "shortage") and its possible effect on the future of space exploration ... on science fiction?

WOLLHEIM: I am inclined to think that the current energy shortage is a contrived situation, and to a great extent, a fraud. On the other hand, it is true that the amount of oil, gas and coal on this planet is finite and that eventually it is going to run out -- the first two within fifty to a hundred years, and coal shortly after. So on the whole it is perhaps a good thing that this contrived energy scare came along when it did -- in time to force politicians, corporations and people to look to the permanent solution of the world's need for energy. There are only two such solutions of sufficient strength to maintain our high level technological culture -- solar power and nuclear power -- and in the long run these will turn out to be the same thing. Solar power is nuclear power -- but the reactor is the sun, a source of virtually infinite ener-

gy radiation (infinite from the homo sapiens species life probability). What is needed is to tap this source in its fullest sense.

There is one obvious solution and that is the solar power accumulator satellite. Basically the same premise that Gernsback (and others) outlined back more than fifty years ago -- space mirrors in orbit. The problem that must be solved by technology is now to transmit that power from satellite to the surface of the Earth without damage to the atmosphere and without major loss. This can be solved, I am sure, and probably with less expenditure of research money than Manhattan Project solved the problem of the atomic bomb. Once that is solved, there will be infinite power in permanent availability for the entire population of the world for all time to come.

The blockage -- the oil companies needless to say, intend to continue to make as much money as they can before this final solution is achieved. Anyone with a more than elementary knowledge of world politics of the past hundred years knows that OIL has been a major, possibly the major, economic force and political power behind international politics hidden beneath the superficialities of the surface political machinations.

We shall have to live with the oil-business-camouflage for a good many years to come -- but eventually the final resource will have to be resorted to -- the solar power satellite. I have never had the slightest doubt that this is so. The rest is bullshit. This also means that we shall go into space and stay there. From there, the stars! So just hang in there, friends, the power is there!

SFR: Thank you, Don Wollheim.

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Art 79

AND THEN I READ....



By THE EDITOR

HEROICS by George Alec Effinger
Doubleday, \$7.95

It begins intriguingly enough with an 82 year old heroine being hounded by a 15 year old niece in a 23rd century house/home after civilization-as-we-know-it (cities, aircraft, autos, etc) has been bulldozed down and covered up by dutiful politicians and scientists appalled at their handiwork (and because the resources had run out).

The home in which granny Irene lives is owned by her nephew and his wife, and Irene is not really wanted. So she runs away--heading vaguely toward California to complete her precious collection of Depression glass objects.

Wild? Weird? Yes, if only because the house they live in is one of a very few left in their area, and because the family has the services of (apparently) three robots passing as Cook, Butler and Maid, and nephew can order weather to suit his whim by way of Butler.

You'd think an 82-year-old granny would die en route (about five miles down the path) but Irene is taken in hand by a magical entity called Glorian who provides food and clothing and on occasion different bodies of other sex/age, and who puts her through various morally and intellectually disturbing "tests" which expand her consciousness.

It's all mysterious, puzzling and Pregnant With Message. I expected the end of the book to pay-off with a Blinding Realization of Cosmic Import. It didn't even cure my arthritis.

Irene makes a mind-blowing discovery about herself, however, and Effinger gets his metaphysical, metaphorical melange into the reader's head...something about how clever the author is and how solipsism is the True Meaning of Existence... I think.

It doesn't really matter, because Effinger is only a figment of my imagination...along with all the rest of you.

GODS IN A VORTEX by David Houston
Liesure Books 699, \$1.75

A pretty good delineation of a struggle between an anarchistic colony planet and a home world ruled by rotting religion and socialism. The decor is great---Rome and Persia come to mind for the home world, and a functional California modern for the anarchistic colony.

Houston adds the fillip of humans with wings which are cut off after childhood as a religious abomination.

The power/propaganda struggle is sketchy but realistic, if the final solution seems a bit incredible.

Worth reading.

COSMIC ENCOUNTER by A. E. van Vogt
Doubleday, \$8.95

There are several things wrong with this new novel from a reader's viewpoint: it strains credulity to the cracking point, and it is told from a third-person viewpoint that is often alien in its objectivity.

Van Vogt asks us to accept that all of time/space is collapsing (or has collapsed) to the year 1704 A.D. because atoms have rudimentary intelligence and have been "instructured" to return to their primary position in the primary super-sun before the universe exploded. And that the atom prime is in the body of an English pirate and he is therefore the key person/focus in attempts to return the universe/time to proper orientation.

It's somewhat complicated and unbelievable.

The van Vogtian writing style in this novel is strange: he sees humans as machines---organs and complicated electrochemical processes and mental states/reactions---and also as everyday humans. He switches in and out of these narrative positions. And he puts some awful, pointlessly clumsy, grammar into the mouth/mind of a far-far future man who was precipitated into 1704 A.D. (along with a warship full of computer-brained robots, and a passenger/colony ship from even farther in the future).

It's a clumsy, wild, implausible, slightly repellent story...but it keeps you reading.

I suspect VV is, in these latter stages of his writing career, reaching, taking more and more extreme positions, exploring more and more tenuous intellectual/scientific ideas...expressing more and more a contempt for ordinary men and women, seeking (in fiction) to satisfy some yearning in him for a world or a

life conducted with sanity and intelligence. He keeps creating supermen; but I suspect the machine is getting too old and out of tune.

KEEPING TIME by David Bear
St. Martin's, \$9.95

A future private-eye novel, and a good one.

In 1999, in New York, a technology has been developed (for rich clients) to allow individuals to literally save their time---seconds, minutes, hours---on a recording tape. And deposit it in a small, exclusive private bank vault.

And what happens when five tapes are stolen?

Enter Jack Hughes, 50ish, soured on a sour life in an energy-starved world of breakdowns and social disintegration, to investigate the theft for the bank owner.

David Bear writes well, and the interest is on the world in which he lives as much as on solving the theft and the "murder" which develops as he investigates.

The novel is as much, also, a novel of character---Hughes' and those whose tapes were stolen.

At times his dialogue is a bit too cute and Bogartish, but worth-hell.

I wonder why there aren't more sf-detective novels written---and published. Seems a perfect marriage.

AN ACCOUNT OF A MEETING WITH DENIZENS OF ANOTHER WORLD - 1871

By William Robert Loosley
[Edited and with Commentary by David Langford]

St. Martin's Press, \$7.95
175 Fifth Av.
New York, NY 10010

A slim puzzling volume. It is a sandwich---an opening segment by Langford titled "A Question of Proof" in which he discusses the problems of proving validity in UFO reports---then the Account by Loosley dated 1871---then Langford again with "The Question of Interpretation" in which he examines Loosley's story and discusses it in light of present-day science.

The puzzle is why St. Martin's published it, given its cost and narrow appeal.

It is also a curiosity because in my opinion the book is a fraud, a hoax, a put-on.

William Robert Loosley (if he really existed) is reported to have been a carpenter, a builder of homes and buildings. Yet the Account is written with such skill---the skill

of a first-rate journalist/author of much talent---that the likelihood of an ill-educated 19th century journeyman woodworker having penned it is vanishingly small.

Langford says the ms. was found hidden in an old desk, in a secret compartment.

Surre is was.

Dave Langford is a physicist and a leading sf fan in England whose writings have won him wide praise and recognition, including a Hugo nomination.

A clue lies in the last few lines of Langford's Introductory Note: "In the most fascinating and convincing account there still lurks the possibility of error or fabrication.

"The reader is warned."

And a reading of the ms. will convince any professional writer or editor that it is the work of a very good contemporary. I'm afraid Dave did too good a job.

THE HUNTERS by Burt Wetanson & Thomas Hoobler
Playboy Press [\$1.95 + 50¢ Handling]
747 Third Av.
New York, NY 10017

The always-reliable story of aliens come to Earth on a hunting trip. Made relevant by using "lures" who appear to humans as favored people to bring a group of small-towners in Colorado to a remote area for the hunt. The lures promise Salvation.

The alien commander in charge of this safari with bored, petulant, selfish, arrogant types of 'tourists' appreciates the danger of the hunt. But not enough.

The humans at least partly become the hunters, and manage to....

It's a good, convincing, well-written novel. Some good characterization which makes you care for the victims and the survivors.

The ending leaves room for a sequel.

THE OLD GODS WAKEN by Manly Wade Wellman
Doubleday, \$7.95

Silver John is a rootless man of goodwill and arcane knowledge who becomes involved in a supreme struggle against revived Druidism and the Old Ones' evil powers, in Southern Appalachia.

Set in now, told in the idiom of the region, it is a story of considerable power, realism and intensity. The last half of the book has mythic structure as John and an older, Cherokee medicine man face seven magical tests in their struggle to save a young man and woman from death as sacrifices atop Wolter Mountain.

Wellman knows the ways and talk of the people, and a sample is in order:

The way I've just been a-telling, Mr. Creed was powerful mad at what had gone with the Voths, but nair in his life did he forget his manners with somebody he reckoned was worth a show of them.

The turns of phrase and use of words is a delight.

This is the first of a series of Silver John novels. This is disciplined, very enjoyable fantasy.

THE BEGINNING PLACE by Ursula K. Le Guin
Harper & Row, \$8.95

A fantasy in which a young man and a young woman, both in very unhappy life situations in present-day reality, discover, independently, a 'gateway' to another world that seems at first to be ideal: quiet, rural, peaceful, with townspeople who like them and take them in....

Hugh and Irena at first dislike and distrust each other when they encounter each other in this other, "escape" world. But as they interact in relation to the townspeople and the terrible problem the town has, they at first tolerate each other, then....

For a reason never explained, the town is isolated and the people are unable to journey to the City or trade with other towns. There is a terrible secret they hide from Hugh and Irena, a horrible problem which, they say, only Hugh can put right for them.

With Irena's help he goes up the mountain and kills a rather pathetic but dangerous monster.

The reader assumes the village is saved. Not explained is why the monster has to be placated with human sacrifices every once in a

while, why fear of it is so overwhelming, and why a group of armed (with swords, spears, bows---fire-arms are not known in this land) men couldn't kill the creature or seal it in its cave.

Ursula seems to be speaking in metaphor throughout this novel, commenting on the binding fears that hold us all in various ways, which rule us and impoverish us, and which can be shattered more easily than imagined.

There is a welcome gritty realism to much of this book, and very good characterization.

LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE by Robert Silverberg
Harper & Row, \$12.50

After an absence of several years, Bob Silverberg has returned to science fiction with a case of gigantism.

[Every other Big Name S-F Writer is making big money by writing Big novels, so....]

I estimate this book runs 170,000 words (446 pages) and it took me days and days to read it.

No one cares how long a novel is if it is a gripping, powerful reading experience. [With that kind of book you wish it would never end.]

But while LORD VALENTINE'S CASTLE is full of picturesque detail, contains some vivid and exciting adventure, and contains some interesting and memorable characters, it is also tedious and at times a drag.

The story is 19th centuryish: the ruler of a giant Earth-like planet is deposed by switching his mind/soul from his rightful body to that of a nobody. His body is taken over by an ambitious rival.

Valentine is the deposed ruler, and his memory is clouded; we meet him as he is about to enter a small city on the coast of a monstrously large sea.

The balance of the novel is the story of his gradual regaining of memory and knowledge of self, his striving to prove who he really is, and his struggle to regain his throne.

Dumas may have written a similar story of a king deposed, presumed killed, with amnesia, who fights to overcome the usurper.

Bob put in an enormous amount of work in this novel: he created a giant planet, Majipoor, a unique system of government---The Coronal (king), the King of Dreams (who keeps social order by means of Sendings [vivid dreams], the Lady of the Isle (who is forgiving and loving, in dreams), and the Pontifex (who rules over a vast bureaucracy buried in



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the Labyrinth, a vast underground of paperwork and bungling).

Valentine, in his new body, becomes a juggler with a troupe made up of four-armed Skanders and two other token humans. He falls in love with Carabella, one of the human jugglers.

There are other non-human races living on Majipoor---vroons who are tentacled and have impressive psi powers, and most fearsome and a key to the novel, the Metamorphs---who can shape-change at will and who are the remnants of the original inhabitants.

The story takes place 14 thousand years after being first colonized by humans from Earth.

The planet is metal poor. The vast scientific works of the first settlers from Earth are either worn out or used and maintained but not understood. There is a kind of Medieval society and culture---idealized. No aircraft at all, not even balloons. The vast bureaucracy is supposed to run the planet without computers.

In many ways the novel (the planet) lacks plausibility; as though it was a set-up tailored to the needs of the surface-bound long-journeys plot.

The characterization of the main actors was a disappointment. A book this long needs actors with quirks, with those extra little touches of humanity which make them real; Bob seemed to try hard, but came up with characters too shallow, too ordinary, too dull to carry a novel of this length.

There are Wonders in this travelogue of a novel, but that isn't enough. At least, not for me.

ASCENDANCIES by D. G. Compton
Berkley/Putnam, \$9.95
[Available May 16, 1980]

In 1998 two monumental facts dominate life in the world: several times a day there are strange "singing"---choirlike sounds which are heard by everyone but which cannot be mechanically or electronically recorded---the smell of sweet roses, and [during these periods of mass hallucination] an average of three million people per month, worldwide, disappear. Vanish. Discorporate. Since 6/11/85.

And: a strange dust, nontoxic fissionable material, has fallen randomly over the Earth, since 10/6/85. It is extraterrestrial, and has produced vast amounts of cheap energy and great crops (in its various applications).

Society has adjusted, after a fashion: Insurance companies have refused to pay off the policies of the Disappeared, and a criminal

business has sprung up: providing, for a fee, a body of suitable type and damage to those who stand to gain a lot if a Disappeared can be successfully palmed off with a bona fide substitute corpse.

Thus the comedy of manners and class and economics in this delicious, funny novel, as Caroline Trenchard's hubby Disappears and she substitutes a body to collect on his vast life insurance policy, and Richard Wallingford, insurance claim adjuster, who discovers the scam and submits greedily to a bribe.

Caroline and Richard interact, are attracted, fall in love, are in turn involved in being blackmailed, and discover untidy, disturbing things about themselves and their world.

It's a fun book, very English in phrase and slang, and a delight.

Only thing is: Compton never does explain the Disappearances and the Moon drift dust. Perhaps next book.

THERE IS A SERPENT IN EDEN
by Robert Bloch
Zebra, \$2.25

It starts: 'Warren Clark couldn't have picked a better day to kill himself.'

And ends: 'The old man smiled. "The secret," he said, "lies in the compost."'

In between is a good, tensioned, suspense story involving a selection of retired people in an upper-middle-class exclusive guarded community in California. A small group of young men plan to hold up the guests at a party....

There is a certifiable crazy-lady, a would-be suicide, a husband-hunting ex-child star, a former mafia biggie, a retired cop, a nosy neighbor.... Bob keeps these and others distinct in your mind, with clear characterization and motives.

There is a happy ending, too, in spite of three homicides and a lot of emotional fallout.

BARLOWE'S GUIDE TO EXTRATERRESTRIALS
By Wayne Douglas Barlowe and Ian Summers. \$7.95
Workman Publishing Co.
1 West 39 Street,
New York, NY 10018

A delight of imagination and artistic skill is what this 48 alien (full color) field guide is.

The book is large, a high-quality trade paperback, and awe-inspiring.



Each alien is shown full figure, and a facing page gives its physical characteristics, its habitat, its culture. There is also at least one detail painting to give an added insight.

In addition, there is a fold-out page giving comparative sizes of the aliens, with a human being used as a guide.

For me the folio of pencil drawings by Barlowe---preparatory renderings, notes, and structural, cut-away and locomotive studies---is of equal absorbing interest, and admiration.

Wayne Douglas Barlowe is an artistic talent of near-genius.

Who/what are the aliens pictured? Creatures from virtually every well-known s-f writer's books: the Aboymenite from Clement's CYCLE OF FIRE; the Athshean from Le Guin's THE WORD FOR THE WORLD IS FOREST; the Gynostik from Bishop's A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE; the Demon from Laumer's A PLAGUE OF DEMONS; the Dillibian from Dickson's SPACEPAW; the Mother from Farmer's STRANGE RELATIONS; the Rini from van Vogt's THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE.... and more and more. Every alien you've ever wondered about and never seen.

AMAZING STORIES---MAY 1980

FANTASTIC SCIENCE FICTION---APRIL 1980

A further new look to these magazines shows in these two new issues. FANTASTIC is now FANTASTIC SCIENCE FICTION (a sign that fantasy by itself is fading as a selling factor?), and both magazines have the same interior format---all the nonfiction departments and columns gathered in the front of the magazines (with the exception of "Fantastic Facts" by Thomas Easton, which is a science column very near the back of the book of FANTASTIC SF).

The format is very busy---lots of pictures and graphics, and a crowded feel/look, too. Generally

the nonfiction is presented in two column pages, while the fiction is printed in full-page (book) columns. The exception is Darrell Schweitzer's serialized fantasy novel, THE WHITE ISLE (two-column format).

The artwork is good to excellent, especially the work of Steve Fabian and Gary Freeman.

These are packages that should appeal to teenagers. There are a lot of juvenile factors---letter columns, female nudes of the non-pubic kind, and a choice of fiction aimed at the young, inexperienced reader. The illustrations, also, are of the action/sword-wielding mighty-thewed hero type, in many instances.

The fiction, with few exceptions, is bad.

I find the print too small and dense, for easy reading. But young eyes and more patient minds may find it okay for them.

The really bad news for the magazines is in the Statements of Ownership, Management and Circulation: AMAZING is down to a paid circulation of 17,560, almost a 5,000 copy drop from last year, and FANTASTIC has plunged to 14,779, down from 18,370 from last year. Both magazines are taking heavy returns of unsold copies---49,000 (AMAZING), and 48,000 (FANTASTIC).

It is, frankly, a miracle these magazines continue to be published and distributed. If they cannot improve paid circulation with the new format I doubt they'll be around a year from now. (But we said that a year or so ago, too, didn't we?)

ALONGSIDE NIGHT by J. Neil Schulman
Crown Publishers, \$8.95
One Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016

Probably the best Libertarian novel since ATLAS SHRUGGED, I think. Not as heavy (by far!) with lectures, and much more readable and gripping.

In 1999 America has gone the road of terminal inflation (\$11,500 for one night at a first class hotel) and is bankrupt as the hard-money Europeans are about to refuse to accept the printing-press New Dollars the U.S. government has been printing and printing and printing....

The government is desperate as it fights internal unrest and the growing, sophisticated, underground anarchistic counter-economy based on gold and the Market.

The story is centered on young Elliot Vreeland, son of the prominent hard-money economist who is on a secret government arrest list.

The family try to escape and only Elliot avoids arrest. Seeking help he becomes involved with the Revolutionary Agorist Cadre and

joins their movement in order to free his family.

He meets and joins a young woman, the daughter of the director of the F.B.I., who is violently against her father and the government.

The plot is basic and formula, but well-handled, well-written, well-paced. The everyday life shown in passing is one of social and cultural disintegration and the inevitable resort to dictatorship by the administration.

There is Message in this novel, of course, but it is inherent in the action and dialogue and never intrudes.

I am impressed by Schulman's writing skills; this is a first novel, and a winner.

ALLEN
Avon 46631, \$8.95

Large-size trade paperback photo-story (using stills from the movie) with minimal dialogue below or to the side of the photos.

In some ways superior to the film, because you can study the interior of the alien spaceship, the scene where the alien tears its way out of Kane's belly, the scenes showing the alien's horrible body as it matures, the grisly decapitation and dissection of the "human" robot, Ash....

These images went by so quickly in the movie that it's a treat to be able to examine them in detail in this book. There are many things I missed and now am now aware of; I appreciate the movie more.

STAR CHASE by Brian James Royal
Elsevier/Nelson Books, \$7.95
2 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10016

All the bad things we're not supposed to like: a PLANET STORIES formula, pulp writing, fantasy science, cardboard characters....

It's the struggle of Reed No-vack to kill the awful alien life-force-eating creature which menaces mankind, to identify the killers of Nels Larsen (the famous scientist who created Reed from a barely functioning brain and heart after a military battle) who framed him for the murder, and to live to enjoy life with lovely Mai Valoris.

Put your credulity on ice and pocked your disbelief. Either that or be 12 years old. This is a Juvenile.

The dust jacket says "Brian

James Royal is a pseudonym for a popular author of numerous mysteries, westerns and thrillers."

I presume he stopped reading sf in 1955.

Give it its due: it has good pace, good tension, a happy ending.

FIGHTING SLAVE OF GOR by John Norman
DAW UE1522, \$2.25

This is the author's 14th book of the counter-Earth saga involving the planet Gor and its super macho society: men are true men when they dominate, rape, enslave women; women are only truly feminine when they submit to a strong man's will and lust.

All else is secondary, and if this premise entices you, this novel and this saga is your meat, because the sadism and masochism, the litany of master and slave, is repeated and repeated and repeated in scene after scene, in clumsy, inept, obsessive exchange of talk after talk, and chapter after chapter.

For the ordinary sf reader this novel makes its interesting point immediately and becomes sheer boredom thereafter.

It is quickly apparent that this author and this novel is trapped (or reveling) in a repellent psycho-sexual fantasy.

There is an audience for this material, obviously, and the author has found it (and it him).

The science fictional planet Gor is only a device, a stage setting, on which to act out this power fantasy in exquisite, endlessly repetitive detail.

As writing, this is simply terrible. As a novel this is simply terrible. As a feeding of a large group of people who will pay for an engorgement of this type, it is simply wonderful.

THE LATHE OF HEAVEN by Ursula K. Le Guin
Avon 43547, \$1.95

Some of us remember a similar story: a movie named THE MAN WHO COULD WORK MIRACLES, in the 1930s. In that story the Gods gave an ordinary man the power to make his wishes come true.

In this novel, Ursula K. Le Guin's ordinary man's dreams (controlled by his subconscious) can, in certain circumstances, come true. He can change reality---and only he knows it has been changed, at first.

Both stories are about the abuse of power and the corruption of mind

that results from the use of absolute power.

The Le Guin novel has science fiction trappings (a polluted, statist, hungry, desperate near future) but betrays the reader by not answering the obvious questions: why does George Orr possess this power to alter the past and present to any extent, and how does this power operate?

Both the 30's movie and this novel moralistically show the futility of using absolute power to help oneself or mankind--there's always a catch.

In real life, however....

SUPEX-SPY K-13 IN OUTER SPACE

By Bob Teague

Illustrated by Sammis McLean

Doubleday, \$8.95

I am always amazed at these sf books written and published for children---in this case for 8-12 year olds. The "window" of age available to publishers of children's books is narrow because TV, movies and newspapers have brought maturity at earlier and earlier ages, and children graduate to "adult" books and magazines very soon, and especially so in science fiction where so much of the genre is de facto Juvenile to begin with.

This large-size, expensive hardback is obviously aimed at parents who want something that might appeal to their little boy for his birthday.

The story itself is ludicrous, impossible, a fraud in every respect. It might amuse a ten-year-old with its evil Dr. Sly and the Whammer-Jammer machines, but he would also (I hope) wonder at the terminal stupidity of the evil Dr. and cohorts which allows young Super-spy K-13 to singlehandedly foil their scheme to enslave all Earth.

Our hypothetical 10-year-old would identify with K-13's love for peanut-butter and jelly sandwiches.

The many, large full-color illus by Sammis McLean are appropriate and okay.

This book is also available in a library edition.

THE PATCHWORK GIRL by Larry Niven
Ace trade paperback; April publication, \$5.95 Illustrated by Fernand.

A superior science fiction murder mystery set on the moon in the future of Gil Hamilton, a man well known to Earth, the moon residents, and asteroid beltiers.

He has a phantom, psi-activated arm with which he can feel around in distant areas. And this power helps a bit in solving the murder of a friend on the moon during an important crime/law conference between beltiers, moon people, and Earth delegates.

There is an attempted murder first--a laser beam through a window--and then the trial of a beautiful woman for the crime. The penalty is being placed in the organ bank.

The actual murder is an accident created by an attempt to cover up the identity of the would-be killer in the first instance.

All this is complicated because of the mooners culture, laws concerning the organ bank...the entire, fascinating, different cultures and societies in conflict in this real science fiction novel.

The solving of the murder mystery is a matter of physics, character, law, and guts.

This is an entertaining, involving, honest (no sluffing, no cheating) murder mystery with twists, turns and surprises. The science element is eye-opening and captivating.

An excellent read, a fine effort by Larry. He is always worth reading. When you read as much junk as I do, you tend to slobber over a fine piece of professional writing, and a skilled, mature, conscientious writer.

THE ORPHAN by Robert Stallman

Pocket Books 82958-0, \$2.25

Stallman is clearly an excellent writer, and this novel of an intelligent, young alien with shape-changing ability marooned on Earth in the 1930s, shows superior talent and skills.

The beast is immature and is in his natural form a terrifying creature of terrible fang and claw--a cross between a bear, a wolf and a demon.

He knows enough to shape-change to a small human boy and allow himself to be adopted by a farm couple. And he learns and adapts very well in that form...but must at night assume his true form for recreation and food and comfort: his real senses are keen and precise--as a human he is figuratively half blind, deaf, deprived.

Much is unexplained--deliberately. It seems that his human boy persona is a creation of his subconscious and is a separate Self, a separate personality, yet who is aware of the beast. Also, we are not told where the beast/alien came from or how, or why.

Events force him to abandon the little boy form/identity and escape developing awareness of his peculiar and horrifying alternate form.

He becomes an older boy--early teenage--and melds into the social fabric of a farm community far from that of his first human identity.

But, because he has beast needs, and because he has a need for human love, a need to help those humans he is close to and loves, he is revealed to friends and family as a monster...and must again flee.

Make no mistake, this is not a Juvenile--sex and violence are here and not blinked. In every aspect this is an adult novel, beautifully executed.

This book, **THE ORPHAN**, is subtitled inside as **The First Book of the Beast**. I look forward to subsequent novels in this saga.

I kid you not: this is a damned good novel, and Stallman is a damned good writer.

The book has an excellent cover by Maitz.

THE WORLDS OF SECTOR P by K.D. Franklin

Dobson Books, L4.25

80 Kensington Church Street, London W.8, England

A badly written, implausible, idiot-plot sf space adventure. When the hero says, "I reckon" a lot, and a hyperspace jump in a spaceship involves the automatic loss of cabin air and cabin dust--but not the loss of air in spacesuits or air tanks!--I get nauseous. Add a clumsily arranged and technologically malaprop theft of a spaceship...

I conclude that this first sf novel by K.D. Franklin (curious that the copyright is in the name of A.A. Haslam) was written without benefit of an extensive reading of science fiction, and that the editor of Dobson is also bereft of sf experience ---or doesn't care. Pity. This novel is for morons only.



SOFT TARGETS by Dean Ing
Ace trade paperback, \$4.95

A brutally realistic novel of international terrorism come to the U.S. A fringe terrorist group called Fat'ah, led by a vicious, cunning fanatic named Hakim Arif, wages a campaign for media attention by means of atrocity.

Three TV men (and an FCC Commissioner) conceive a way for the TV media to use satire and humor against the terrorists of the world and especially in the United States. These three themselves become targets for the terrorists.

It gets harrowing near the end as two of the men are successfully kidnapped by Fat'ah and tortured.

This novel will force thoughts about the nature of mankind, the horrible tortures the human mind can conceive, and the ruthlessness of national intelligence forces---KGB, CIA, etc. These will not be comfortable thoughts. Ing here deals with reality; more reality than most of us care to face.

There's a love story in the novel, but it's there by plot reflex. Good characterization.

THE STARS MY DESTINATION Vol.1
by Alfred Bester
Illustrations by Howard Chaykin
Panel Configurations by Byron Preiss
Produced by Byron Preiss Visual
Publications, Inc.
Published by Baronet, \$8.95

This is the one sf novel, I'd say, which could best benefit from the graphic story format recently developed by Byron Preiss---a free-form combination of the novel's text and hundreds of vivid, full-color illustrations.

Chaykin is superb, and his visuals are often riveting and awe-inspiring; they add tremendously to the story.

What a shame that this classic had to be broken up into two volumes.

This is the story of Gully Foyle, of course, the loner, the anti-hero, survivor of a shattered starship, driven to seek revenge on.... The picture of a rotten, insane civilization in the 25th Century written by Bester is enhanced by Chaykin's art.

If you can get both volumes, this effort by Preiss, Chaykin and Baronet is worth purchasing. I've only Vol one here, and am not sure Vol two was ever issued. It was promised for the Fall of '79.

The book is large size, heavy slick paper, softcover binding, 96 pages. A limited edition---hardcover, slipcased, numbered edition was also published. If interested write Baronet Publishing Co., 509 Madison Av., New York, NY 10022.



MAGIC TIME by Kit Reed
Berkley/Putnam, \$10.95

Happy Habitat is a super Disneyland/Westworld type of life-experience park---in the future, in which a combination of fake and real-life results in real deaths in battle scenes and staged historical.

The owners/operators of Happy Habitat are not even above kidnapping and using the inhabitants of their retirement village as cannon-fodder.

The novel starts with a plane crash into a jungle---a Habitat jungle---and the wealthy man and family---on-the-way-to vacation (to H. Habitat!) are used as a side-show and exhibit as they struggle to survive.

Boone Castle, an itinerant holograph cameraman in employ to the rich man's ego is suspicious first, then others in H. Habitat---an old woman, a guard, a guest---become aware of the truth and eventually link up to try an escape.

It's a good read, some surprises, and constant action with shifts from viewpoint to viewpoint giving a panoramic understanding of the place and its m.o.

But the story is a bit Too Much, reads credulity here and there, and the final chapters are sheer fantasy-land.

IMAGES OF HORROR AND FANTASY
by Gert Schiff

Harry N. Abrams, Inc., \$19.95

This large-size art book has nothing to do (except it springs from the same sources) with pop horror or sf and fantasy commercial art. It is a "fine arts" delving into the human psyche---the dark corners---and its images are often so graphic and archetypal that they compel long study. You can almost feel the linkage with the artist...with the primal urges chained in your own head.

Some of the artwork---by well-known, acclaimed artists---is shock-

ingly crude and amateurish...and some of it is so astonishingly superb and technically perfect that it makes you want to cry...or scream. Some of it hits you like a sledgehammer.

The commentary by Schiff is literate, informative, interesting. But the book is too ambitious, covers too much ground to be definitive. Subjects/chapters range through Fear/Despair, Religion/Supernatural, Persecution/Paranoia, Captivity/Madness, Pain/Torture, Sex/Sadism, Death, War, Dream, Utopia/Arcadia. There are 119 illustrations, 47 in full color.

GIANTS

Illustrated by Julek Heller, Carolyn Scrase and Juan Wijngaard.
Devised by David Larkin
Text by Sarah Teale
Harry N. Abrams, Inc., \$17.50

All three artists are very, very good. Their paintings and drawings of giants from myth, legend and folk tales are fine. The text details the legends, myths, etc.

I especially admire the superb pencil sketches---and my complaint is that they are unsigned. In fact, all the paintings, sketches, etc. are unsigned.

(It should be noted that much of the illustration deals in speculative material---what certain giants looked like, how they lived, worked, played....)

Altogether a theme book that is limited to European and American giants, especially in a medieval setting. I suppose it seemed like a good idea.

It has 171 illustrations, 141 in full color. Large-size hard-back.



OTHER VOICES

THE SPIRIT OF DORSAI

By Gordon R. Dickson

Illustrated by Fernando Fernandez

Ace, NY, Trade edition: \$5.95.

Standard edition: \$2.25

Reviewed by Sandra Miesel

THE SPIRIT OF DORSAI pairs Gordon R. Dickson's superb new novella "Amada Morgan" with his memorable 1973 novelette "Brothers" (originally written for ASTOUNDING: THE JOHN W. CAMPBELL MEMORIAL ANTHOLOGY). The two halves of the book fit together as smoothly as yin and yang.

Dickson calls these stories "illuminations" to his Childe Cycle, the 12-volume epic of human evolution he has been constructing for the past 20 years. Illuminations are shorter works that share background, characters, and principles with the Cycle proper but stand outside the main philosophical theme developed in the novels. Ace is reissuing the Cycle's previous installments (DORSAI!, NECROMANCER, TACTICS OF MISTAKE and SOLDIER, ASK NOT) while the next two (THE FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA and CHILDE) are in preparation. "Amada Morgan" runs concurrently with TACTICS OF MISTAKE, "Brothers" with both DORSAI! and SOLDIER, ASK NOT, and the conversational interludes linking the two stories grow out of THE FINAL ENCYCLOPEDIA.

This diptych structure works beautifully because contrast heightens the effect of each component. Literary complementarity between these feminine and masculine adventures prefigures the symbolic complementarity between feminine and masculine forces that is to be perfected at the Cycle's close. Balancing "Amada Morgan" against "Brothers" allows Dickson to demonstrate the martial spirit of Dorsai operating at home and abroad, withstanding attacks from without and within. As quintessential Warriors, the Dorsai are the self-defense mechanism of the racial organism. Their function is to resist evil and protect good. Neither tyrants nor the turbulence of their own natures can ever entirely conquer them.

Both stories offer thematic arguments rebutting critics of earlier Cycle publications. Although war is the professional specialty of the Dorsai Splinter Culture, relatively few Dorsai follow military careers. Thus Amada Morgan, a 92-

year-old matriarch who has never worn a uniform in her life is as representative of the Dorsai Way as Commander Ian Graeme in "Brothers". Dorsai indomitability blazes as brightly in oldsters, cripples, children and housewives as in mighty men of battle. (Likewise, the unique Dorsai gifts can be abused by any member of their society.) Dickson also uses "Amada Morgan" to depict events that were left off-stage in TACTICS OF MISTAKE. He not only shows the Dorsai successfully defending their homes against invaders from Earth, that makes their resistance plausible: "Amada Morgan"''s battlefield will not be mistaken for a war game board: human frailties affect cunning strategies and casualties mean real anguish.

The intrinsic excellence of "Amada Morgan" merits a Hugo Award but this novella also marks a significant milestone in Dickson's campaign to improve female characterization. In the past, his heroines have been little more than pieces of plot machinery designed to impede and reward his heroes. But Amada is a wonderfully convincing blend of courage and vulnerability, competence and anxiety who is still growing in her tenth decade of life. The very discursiveness of the narrative subtly conveys the texture of an elderly mind: Amada has lived so long and fully that the usual distinctions between past, present, and future have begun to blur. Her capacity for perceiving existence as a continuous, interrelated Now foreshadows the effect of the completed Cycle itself.

"Brothers" is an ideal counterpart to "Amada Morgan" in that it is tightly focused and relentlessly masculine. It also reveals the advantage of series writing from still another angle. This is the third time Dickson has dramatized the tragic murder of Kensie Graeme and his twin brother Ian's scalding grief. What began as a simple plot device in DORSAI! and grew into a vehicle for metaphysics, morality, and myth in SOLDIER, ASK NOT, here becomes the occasion for an adventure in which the action is as much spiritual as physical. That Dickson can make the same incidents and characters exciting at three different levels of magnification is a measure of his technical virtuosity.



"Brothers" shares some of SOLDIER, ASK NOT's themes -- the corrosiveness of self-hatred, the horror of brother-slaying, the hero's saving death -- but emphasizes the actual circumstances of the murder and its solution. The plot is a race between justice and vengeance: Will the assassins be caught before the Dorsai face the classic temptation of the warrior caste, to turn their swords against those whom they have sworn to protect. The unyielding discipline of Ian Graeme, the ultimate Dorsai, preserves the honor of his people unstained. Yet Ian's superhuman exertions would have failed with the aid of the narrator, a stubbornly conscientious policeman who has ironically little sympathy for Ian. The epic figure really needs his small prosaic counterpart -- Dickson is no Heinlein.

The title "Brothers" is ambiguous because the inseparable Graeme twins are not the only ones involved. Heroes and villains, victims and betrayers are arranged in interlocking pairs. The entire story is woven out of the grief and glory of fraternal love. The tragedy that parts Ian and Kensie paradoxically reconciles the military and civilian orders. This motif of the Twin Brothers, first sundered and then united, is of paramount importance in the Childe Cycle.

THE SPIRIT OF DORSAI has the finest text of any "profusely illustrated" Ace book to date. Unfortunately, the slick and often grainy-looking artwork clashes with the understated dignity of the prose. Fernando Fernandez' pictures interrupt rather than amplify Dickson's words. Fernandez' grasp of the characters' appearance is unsteady -- there is simply no excuse for the Sex Kittens of Dorsai treatment accorded the women defenders. "Brothers" suffers less than "Amada Morg-

an" because the artist seems more at home drawing muscular young men in tight uniforms than elderly ladies. The overall impression is of a fine pearl in a plastic setting.

Ignore the inept embellishments. Savor the beauty of the fiction. Experience the fierce, enduring courage that is the spirit of Dorsai.

SEVEN FROM THE STARS

By Marion Zimmer Bradley
Ace, 151 pp., \$1.95
Cover: Steve Hickman

Reviewed by Steven Edward McDonald

Reprint of a 1961 short novel by Marion Zimmer Bradley, published for the first time by itself -- it was formerly half of an Ace Double.

The story of seven survivors of a destroyed starship, crashlanded on Earth in the present day, pretty much standard SF stuff for that period and publisher, and, at that time, the writer. The writing shows flashes of what sort of writer Marion would become, and the story has some interesting elements: The alien survivors are taken for Mexican immigrants (and survive in that role for a while), which rather belies Hickman's cover -- two of the characters he depicts have green hair (a Hickman trademark, apparently). Overall, it is a fair book -- some good bits, some bad, and some average -- with hints of above-the-normal potential, left unfulfilled.

It would (he says, with trepidation) make an excellent TV movie (even a feature, who knows?), but the book would perhaps have gone better with a second short novel attached, as Ace is doing with Shekley and Chandler. Completists will want a copy, casual readers may, given the price and slimmness, pass it up in favor of something more modern, and somewhat thicker. A pity.

Hickman's cover is a definite plus, reminiscent of the old zap-bang covers, with a lot more quality. Nice balance.

THE COMPLETE OAK LEAVES

Edited by David Anthony Kraft
Fictioneer Books, Screamer Mt.,
Clayton, GA, 30525
Paperback, 192 pages, \$10.00

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

OAK is Otis Adelbert Kline (1891-1946), an early contributor to WEIRD TALES and other SF and fantasy publications, and OAK LEAVES is a fanzine devoted to resurrecting

interest in Kline and his work after decades of neglect.

Started in 1970 by Fictioneer's publisher, David Anthony Kraft, OAK LEAVES has taken ten years to accumulate a dozen issues of material by and about Kline. Now those twelve issues have been gathered together as the first volume in Fictioneer's new line of Fictioneers Facsimile reprints.

OAK LEAVES is of little interest to the average reader, but anyone interested in SF/fantasy of the 1920s and 30s and especially in the history of the pulp magazines would do well to look into it. Kline not only wrote fairly prolifically for the pulps, he also acted as agent for other pulp writers such as Robert E. Howard and Otto Binder, and even edited an issue of WEIRD TALES himself while it was undergoing one of its periodic upheavals. OAK LEAVES includes letters to and from Kline, some of his poetry, reprints of some of his stories, an account of his feud with Edgar Rice Burroughs, accounts of his life and a variety of other material centering on his life and work.

Almost forgotten today, Kline wrote 13 novels and many short stories and was a definite influence on the pulp development of SF. Fictioneers also has two of his adventure novels, JAN OF THE JUNGLE and JAN IN INDIA, and a collection of his stories, THE BRIDE OF OSIRIS, in print -- probably the only OAK titles now generally available. Hardly a giant in his field, Kline nevertheless deserves to be remembered and OAK LEAVES does its best to see that he is.

HAN SOLO AT STARS' END

By Brian Daley
Del Rey, 183 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Steven Edward McDonald

Paperback edition of the third STAR WARS based novel, this time featuring the pre-movie adventures of Han Solo and Chewbacca.

And unlike the abysmal SPLINTER IN THE MIND'S EYE, this one is both readable and interesting -- Daley is capable of telling a good story, and seems to have had a fairly free hand with the characters (who were indisputably the best characters in the movie). He opens with a bang, and keeps the pace up right through the book -- even to the rather unlikely climax. Characterization, while it won't win any awards, is quite good for this type of book, the writing is excel-

lent, the story is reasonably good, and the reader won't feel gyped through buying the paperback edition. There is some hint that this is going to be a trilogy (the second book is available now), and the fact that the books cover the pre-movie adventures of Solo gives a large hint that the rumors concerning Han's death in THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK are true

Good fun (even if I do prefer Han's mother, Mæve ... she's sexier.) Recommended.

A DIFFERENT LIGHT

By Elizabeth Lynn
Berkley, 1978, 183 pp., #03890-4
Berk Edn, Aug. 1978

Reviewed by Stephen Lewis

What's in store for the artist of the future? With the banishment or long postponement of death so that the individual no longer must put all his effort and energy into his work, must it mean the shriveling up of artistic talent? What would it be like to be trapped on one world slowly dying of an incurable cancer in a universe of space travel that would only hasten the spread of the disease?

Lynn's lyrical writing reminded me both of PLANET STORIES and of Samuel R. Delany, and as I remember the latter's early days, that's hardly as unlikely combination as you might first think. Part of her story is what's often called, and fondly so, a rollicking space adventure, which does not mean that some other part of it can't deal seriously with questions like those above. However, and there does have to be a how-ever this time, I'd have left off the last two chapters, if it were up to me. Having acclaimed artist Jimson Alleca find an alternative to his booklong affliction at this point seemed to be greatly cheating the reader. No significant statement from among the several that seemed to be coming is made -- or it was, and the book went on, blithely ignorant of the fact.

It's still greatly worth reading, and please do, in spite of the awkward tumble the book takes at the end -- or is it just that I disagreed with Miss Lynn's answers?



CATACOMB YEARS

By Michael Bishop
Berkley/Putnam, Jan. '79, 384 pp.
\$10.95 SBN 399-12255-9

Reviewed by Bob Frazier

Controversy exists over the practice, and the inherent success, of fusing published stories into novels. Often they are of different writing styles and/or content. CATACOMB YEARS is not one of those cobblings, but an excellent proof that this experiment can be carried out properly. Much care has been taken in the successful preparation of this volume, and this speaks not only for Bishop's writing abilities, but for David Hartwell's expertise as an editor and B/P's sensitivity as a publisher. CATACOMB YEARS is not a rough sculpture with visible seams and weak welds; it is a polished puzzle entity a la Miguel Berrocal.

CATACOMB YEARS consists of seven stories (one original), linked by interludes, that comprise most of Bishop's UrNu future history. This history is a character study of 40 years of the domed Urban Nucleus of Atlanta, and each piece is more a study of characters and society than hard science extrapolation or quicksilver paced adventure. Many of the characters are blood relatives in the three generations encapsulated within. All these factors are also pertinent to the successful fusion into a novel; for C.Y. is as much that, when read cover to cover, as a collection. Yet is CATACOMB YEARS readable and enjoyable, besides coherent and professional? Yes, and yes; emphatically so.

Though many are familiar stories, anthologized in "Best Of" series, two I had not previously read. They were first and last in the book, as well as in the chronology of their writing.

"If a Flower Could Eclipse" ('70) stands as fresh and strong as any piece in this book, which includes such Hugo and Nebula finalists as "Allegiances" and "The Samurai and the Willows". A doctor, psychologist Greer, attempts to heal the teacher/student relationship between a genius boy and his matriarchal special ed instructor. The situation is complicated by three things: The boy is white and the woman black; the boy's father assassinated the woman's husband, an evangelist of King's stature; the doctor falls in love with Lady Bitler and in hatred with young Nettlinger. The doctor's sanity is finally strained to a breaking point, along with the situation. The characters are interesting, deep and human; and the circumstances unique.

"Death Rehearsals" ('79) concerns another doctor, gerontologist Tanner, who returns from exile to Atlanta, an old man. He links the lives of several important citizens of the city: Julien Cawthorne, emissary to the remaining aliens of 61 Cygni, his wife Margot, a main figure in the central Ortho-Urban-



ist church, and Vivian Klemme, secret emissary from Free Europe with a new immortality process. The story is a complex musical counterpoint of seemingly insignificant events in their lives. Its tone is an important one. It is not quite as inventive as "At the Dixie Apple..." or quite as intense in mood as "The Windows in Dante's Hell", both herein included, but it is fit-

ting as the final episode. Sts ending shows a resurrective change in the arthritic future of the city.

The other story, perhaps new for readers also (Universe 8), is "Old Folks at Home". I found it to be the best of the group, which is no mean feat. Its characters are old people, a refreshing change. They live in a seven-way marriage, an original social concept. They prove that the elder years can be as vibrant and fulfilling as the younger ones, a very hopeful viewpoint. There is not a moment when the reader is not either: sharing a perceptive insight, chuckling gleefully or turning the pages compulsively. This work is both a finely constructed artifact and a darn good yarn; bravo Mr. Bishop. I don't think there is a better story in its category, novella, for '78.

The contents also includes chronologies and data charts for the UNRU future history and a prelude. The binding is first rate, the cover strength better than average, and dustjacket very striking. Great care, in all facets, make this hard-back worth the price. None of the fiction pieces are average; almost half are brilliant. Whether you consider CATACOMB YEARS as a novel or a collection, it is an important SF work for the year '79 and the decade of the '70s.

CITY OF THE BEAST
By Michael Moorcock
DAW, UN1436, 1979, \$1.50
Reviewed by Tom Staicar

DAW has been issuing new editions of Michael Moorcock's heroic fantasy series, and the Elric and Runestaff books have gained a large following. Now that DAW is publishing this first of the Michael Kane trilogy, it is possible that Moorcock's readers will find less of interest in the Kane books. Moorcock has written a new introduction in which he admits that the books have faults but says he has resisted the temptation to revise the novels. He intended to write a series with the color, action and flair of the Edgar Rice Burroughs Mars novels, but even so, CITY OF THE BEAST is so shallow that it is difficult to stay interested long enough to be entertained.

The novel was first published in 1965 under the title, HARRIORS OF MARS, and the pseudonym Edward P. Bradbury. All three novels in the Michael Kane series were written during one week. This should not color our judgment, but in this case, the

book reads as if it was written quickly. Careless mistakes are found in some places, although not outright errors of plotting or character description.

Michael Kane has to conduct a dangerous test of his invention, a matter transmitter. He decides to make the first test on himself and suddenly goes to ancient Mars. Within a few minutes he meets a Martian who happens to be Shizala, the beautiful Princess of Varnal, City of the Green Mists. He falls in love with her, is given a convenient device to allow him to understand Martian and then goes off to transform the military strategies of the armies of Varnal as they defend the city against the dreaded bad guys. Monsters and villains meet him every few paragraphs. He has to outdo



his rival to win Shizala as well as lead the armies who must defend the city against total destruction.

Although he was thrust into ancient Mars without warning and must integrate himself into an alien culture, he never looks back. He doesn't pine away for Earth or try to find a way back home. Perhaps falling in love with the first woman he saw on Mars was a help during his transition period (which lasted about ten minutes).

The reader has to overlook a lot to derive simple pleasure from this adventure. Kane frees some enslaved people from a prison cell and finds that they have neglected to wear deodorant: "The smell of humanity was almost too much to bear, but I knew it was not their fault!". One character asks Kane: "Could you

magically bring half a million men to our aid?" Kane replies: "No, but I can use a sword!". At another point Kane says: "I knew that many animals will go for a spot on other species which corresponds with their own vital spots". Moorcock meant "corresponds to" unless the animals wrote letters and received answers.

In the Burroughs tradition, Kane has a "code of honor" by which he must live. He spares the life of a blue giant Argzoon rather than kill needlessly. In the next few chapters he slashes, bludgeons or stabs to death about a dozen people. Obviously he meant that killing without a good reason was wrong but once a good reason is found, just get on with it.

Pass up this book unless the fast-paced action novel is exactly your type of book. Even so, this one does not compare favorably with the best of that genre.

WOLFHEAD

By Charles L. Harness
Berkley, 1978, 217 pp., #03658-8
Berk Edn, Feb. 1978

Reviewed by Stephen Lewis

I'm a fan of Charles Harness, ever since I read some of his short work first published in the pulp magazines during the 1950s. He's not been very prolific. From then to now, he's obviously been content to make a living somehow else than at a few cents a word. Only rarely does something appear under his byline, and when it does I always snap it up at once.

Harness' work has always been heavily plotted, never quite Van Vogtian in complexity, but still built as though it were layer upon layer of story substance.

That's not the case in WOLFHEAD. At times you get the idea that this novel first appeared in THRILLING WONDER STORIES -- which is hardly what's expected of someone who was clearly ahead of his time when his work really did appear there. A plot summary could be made in a single sentence: A prophecy is fulfilled that 3000 years after the atomic destruction of the world a descendant of the Wolfhead family would travel into the bowels of the earth, destroy an evil culture dwelling there, and return again to safety.

The people living underground are about to emerge again, even though the earth has already been successfully repopulated, but as it happens Jeremy Wolfhead's primary goal is really the rescue of his

kidnapped wife.

The intention is ambitious: Literary allusions to Dante's *INFERNO* and some interesting engineering applications of telekinesis, but what does the story in it too many miracles. Jeremy Wolfhead is one of those individuals blessed by a series of lucky events, and so the single-handed (well, almost) destruction of an entire population is but child's play.

BERSERKER MAN

By Fred Saberhagen
Ace paperback, 219 pp., \$1.95

Reviewed by Neal Wilgus

Fred Saberhagen's *Berserker* series rolls on. You remember the *Berserkers* -- those killer machines whose sole purpose is to rid the universe of life in a singleminded but perverted mission programmed by their long dead alien creators. The centuries-long, Galaxy-wide conflict between humanity and *Berserker* has been chronicled by Saberhagen in dozens of short stories and several novels over the past fifteen years and now *BERSERKER MAN* brings the series to new maturity with the tale of the child-hero, Michel Geulinx, a cyborg truly caught in the middle of the endless battle.

Michel is something special from the very beginning, for he is conceived in a unique place called the Taj, somewhere near the galactic core, and then adopted by brilliant parents on a unique planet in the same neighborhood. While still a boy, Michel is taken to Earth (or at least Luna) to take part in the testing of a new weapon called *Lancelot*, a powerful, almost magical, set of forcefield wings which immediately begin to change the boy into the *Berserker Man* of the title. Kidnapped in a surprise attack by the *Berserkers*, Michel is taken across the Galaxy into *Berserker* country, there to escape and make his way alone back toward the Taj and the secrets, only hinted at, that he is destined to learn.

Saberhagen seems amiss this time around in not expanding the story out to twice its present length -- or perhaps making Michel's story a mini-series in itself. At the beginning of the book, for instance, the reader is led to believe that Michel's real and adopted parents, along with Lombok and Tupelov, two of the men who introduce Michel to the *Lancelot* weapon, would play central roles all through the story -- yet one by one they become irrelevant and drop out of the action, leaving the reader to wonder what

might have gone wrong. More serious is the lack of space devoted to Michel's own development, for he never really emerges as the three-dimensional character he should be and too many years and too much of his experience is glossed over in much too short a space.

But though *BERSERKER MAN* might have been a much better book, it still stands as a title *Saberhagen* can be proud of and one which *Berserker* fans will be anxious to read. A bonus of note is Sandra Miesel's afterword which gives a little background and perspective on the book and on the series as a whole. Also included is a complete *Berserker* bibliography -- especially valuable for those of us who have come in in the middle of the series. Alto-



gether then, *Saberhagen's* latest is a *Berserker* to remember.

THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE TALISMAN

By Clifford Simak
Del Rey Books, 249 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by Lee Smith

This is straight fantasy.

The story takes place in Britain, and since the time is the 1970s, I suppose we can call it a historical novel of an alternate world. In this world conditions of the Middle Ages have prevailed down to the present: Technology has never developed, and so the population and economy have remained rural. As a

result, the political situation is feudal: Every town and village is a self-sufficient fortress -- with the land between them a desolate, gruesome wilderness, populated by bandits, werewolves and roving bands of non-human marauders called *Harriers*.

Through this morass of assorted dangers plods Duncan Standish. With him travels his stout companion, Conrad, their dog Tiny and two beasts of burden, Beauty and Daniel. Along the way they pick up a hermit, a goblin, a ghost, an old witch, a banshee, a wizardess and a demon with a clubfoot. They encounter various *Harriers*, a group of cutthroats, pagan enchantment, dragons and the Huntsman who roams the sky in his chariot with a troop of hounds -- and each such engagement costs them precious time.

All the while Duncan carries a manuscript. This manuscript, allegedly from the time of Jesus, they intend to deliver to a church community for authentication. The authentication, however, can be accomplished only by one certain scholar, who is most aged, and, doctors contend, in his last days. So before he passes away, they hope to reach him with the manuscript.

But this is not easily done. They face staggering opposition and obstacles. Their quest is truly epic. And the background against which this is laid is wrought in immaculate detail.

Simak's world is one of mystical delight. Magic works, God really exists, and the division between good and evil is solid and distinct. All is "clean" in the traditional sense, but words are never minced for the sake of simple Puritanism.

Lost of good reading.

THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA

Edited by Peter Nicholls
Doubleday/Dolphin, \$12.95, 1979

Reviewed by John DiPrete

In recent years nonfiction SF has been nourished by public acceptance in author-interview collections, SF bibliographies, biographies, autobiographies, histories, etc., etc. The latest example, an encyclopedia of SF authors, movies, TV shows, magazines, etc., is perhaps the most spectacular yet. *THE SCIENCE FICTION ENCYCLOPEDIA*, edited by Peter Nicholls, is fully illustrated, alphabetized, and 672 pages in length. It is quite comprehensive, though not all-encompassing: Sever-

algals do exist in subject matter. For instance, although major fanzines such as SF REVIEW, SF COMMENTARY and LOCUS are listed, smaller zines like THRUST, EMPIRE SF and others are omitted. The more professional aspect of SF is stressed.

Coverage of SF authors is excellent. Most of the major writers are represented. Clifford D. Simak, an author I have long admired, is here described with perceptive, intriguing insights. This section and most others, however, are highly opinionative. In an "encyclopedia" of this sort, it is disconcerting to disagree with several evaluations of authors or books and TV programs. Prepare to read critical tidbits you may find hard to swallow (for example, STAR TREK is called a "space opera-format ... not used, as a general rule, with any great imagination", and Simak's output is described as having "strong moral convictions and little real concern for ideas...") yet because the material is highly informed and well-written, we can excuse the opinionative (or at least, non-objective) views. At any rate, true objectivity in a book of this sort is impossible.

A recommended reference work.

CONAN THE BARBARIAN, Vol. 1 - 5
By Roy Thomas and Barry Smith
Ea. 160pp., \$1.95 ea. (Except Vol. 5: \$2.25)
Ace Tempo Star

Reviewed by Steven Edward McDonald

Collections of comics stories featuring REH's Conan of Cimmeria, written by Roy Thomas (writer of the various REH based series at Marvel since CONAN #1), with art work by Barry Windsor-Smith (since departed for more lucrative and freer shores). All the stories have been specially re-edited and arranged for publication in the paperback format, to avoid the problems displayed in other Marvel paperback collections -- reduction of lettering to the point of eyestrain. Stories cover REH's Conan and non-Conan work (including an adaptation of the "The Grey God Passes"), as well as original stories by Thomas, and a story plotted by John Jakes (a later volume will feature the Conan-Elric story plotted by Jim Cawthorn and Michael Moorcock).

The early Conan comics were, for a lot of people, a first introduction to the genre of swords and sorcery -- Conan having been a pet project of Roy Thomas at Marvel (finally given extra impetus by the changes in the Comic's Code that allowed heroes capable of chopping ad-

versaries into little pieces). These collections reprint the first fourteen stories (skipping the Conan-Elric two-part story, which would have been split if the stories had remained entirely in the sequence they appeared).

The early stories managed to preserve a little of the melancholy air REH managed to inject into certain of his stories, as well as adding a somewhat moody, mystical air created by Thomas -- seen best in his transference of "The Grey God Passes" to the Conan storyline; Conan hardly plays an active role -- Thomas gives him something to do to account for his being in the story, but he mostly appears as an observer in a very downbeat tale in which everyone but Conan dies.

Barry Smith's artwork preserves the mood, and gives the reader, in addition, a rather slender, tall Conan who lives up to the image created by REH -- the later Buscema Conan is far more broadly built, and somewhat over-brutish. Despite Roy Thomas' editing, which tends to screw up Smith's artistic flow (his layouts were particularly good) and bollyx up his designs, the flow and motion of Smith's work remains. It's possible to see why the early Conan stories were award winners -- and it's also possible to see precisely how far the comic series has since declined (though the artwork has often come up to the standard it set, occasionally even surpassing it), degenerating into a series of the old S&S cliches, complete with an-all-too-often mindless Conan -- where the climax of Thomas' fleshing out of "The Queen of the Black Coast" should have been close to brilliant, it was merely boring.

The five volumes here reviewed, (and the next few to appear) are worth attention, if you can bear with sword and sorcery, and Conan -- it's an interesting fleshing out, in the visual sense, of the Conan canon. Plus, the stories are also good fun to read, as light entertainment ... beats the nth repeat of the plot Stan Lee created for Spiderman any day.

IDUNA'S UNIVERSE

By E.C. Tubb
DAW, 1979, 156 pp., \$1.75

Reviewed by Howard H. Huggins

It is a little startling to realize that there are now 21 volumes in E.C. Tubb's "Dunarest of Terra" series of which IDUNA'S WORLD is the latest. Tubb has developed a

consistently appealing formula for what is now one of the longest series of its type. The Dunarest novels are first-rate formula/pulp fiction in the honorable but sometimes maligned action/adventure tradition. These tales are predictable, but that is why readers keep buying them. Predictability and delivering the same goods you did the last time are, after all, fundamental to formula fiction and genre literature in general; if you question this see John Cawelti's analysis in ADVENTURE, MYSTERY AND ROMANCE.

However, IDUNA'S UNIVERSE is a disappointing change of pace. This time the menacing Cycran are nowhere in evidence and Dunarest's quest for legendary Terra is interrupted when he is taken captive in a chance slave raid -- the occasion

The Curse Of Conan

Conan never combed his hair
Or cared about the weather.
He rarely sat upon a chair;
He dressed in chain and leather.

Conan ate and drank his will
And no one dared to stop him.
Of wine and love he took his fill,
In truth no one could top him.

But Conan passed like all the rest,
A victim of the ages.
Like all of us he flunked the test
In agonizing stages

-- Neal Wilgus

for a display of his Conan-like reflexes and martial skills. Sold at auction and ordered gelded (ouch!) Dunarest breaks free and holds hostage the planet's Matriarch long enough to impress her as the man she needs for a very dangerous mission. Armed only with his considerable wits Dunarest follows her missing daughter into the other-dimensional reality of an alien artifact, the Tau, from which other would-be rescuers have returned mindless.

Excellent so far. IDUNA'S UNIVERSE falters only when Dunarest enters the world of the Tau where wishes are real and what is real is limited only by the imagination. And there is the rub; it is hard to take the dangers of the Tau very seriously when weapons and even whole armies can be conjured out of thin air to deal with the menace at hand.

Although IDUNA'S UNIVERSE is below par for this series I will look forward to the next one and the return of the sinister Cyclan pursuing Dumarest to the ends of the galaxy and his search for lost Terra. After all, how could any lover of pulp fiction spurn a character whose "face took on the pitiless ferocity of the beast he had hunted and killed" or an author who can write: "Peace was a good thing when applied to animals but suicidal when used to tame men who had the heritage of monsters. Force recognized only one effective argument -- greater force. And all Dumarest had was his knife?" I love this stuff.

OMEGA
By Stewart Farrar
New York Times Books, Jan. 1980
Reviewed by Susan M. Shwartz

Another disaster book in which the meek, the witches, and the rural inherit the earth that the technocrats and urbanites have laid waste to! The only thing different about OMEGA is that his gentle farmers are wiccans, servants of the Great Goddess and practitioners of white magic. Farrar, who lives in a coven, has done a marvellous job of evoking the Craft of Witches; the parts of OMEGA dealing with it are fascinating.

But the rest of the book, in which scientists in trying, through the Mohole, to turn Earth into a self-perpetuating electrical generator (I didn't understand that, and I don't think Farrar does either), unleash earthquakes and a madness-causing dust, doesn't come off. There is a prologue explaining this project, and then the action switches to the Houses of Parliament and a plot to use the witches as a scapegoat so the politicians and Beehivers (technocrats who live in a bunker) can survive. Ultimately they line up with black magic and don't survive ... but I could have guessed that.

Farrar switches from character to character. I found a lot of his switches of point of view bewildering and most of his characters pretty pedestrian -- except for his account of the Magic -- marvelous words and a lot of fascinating information on mythology. Realpolitik and disaster don't suit him -- or this book; I wish he'd tried to write a fantasy, not a polemic. As a disaster-book, LUCIFER'S HAMMER was a lot more satisfying.

MOTHERLINES
By Suzy McKee Charnas
Berkley, \$1.95, 246 pp.
0-425-04157-3 Oct 1979
Reviewed by Lynne Holdom

I had heard a lot about this book, most of it good, mostly from feminist sources. It was supposed to show a vibrant, feminist society which worked. So when this novel came out in paperback, I decided to try it even though I had been less than enthusiastic about Charnas' other novel WALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD. I should have saved my money.

There is a feminist society all right and I suppose it could be called "vibrant" though that's not the word I would have used. "Stagnant" would be more to the point. "Cruel" is another possibility. There is an absence of any male characters from the novel and the message of the novel, constantly hammered in, is that any woman who has been around men is forever ruined, forever doomed to play games of dominance and repression -- a fault also inherent in all male culture.

The plot line is simple. Alldera, the protagonist, who has been brought up in a repressive masculine dominated culture, escapes after she has been brutally raped. As she crosses the wastelands, she is found by the Mares, the Riding Women of the Plains, who care for her for the sake of the child she is carrying. Among them, all children are clones of the mother and so genetic variation is welcomed. But Alldera, spoiled by masculine culture, escapes and goes to live with the Free Fems who are all escapees and similarly ruined as witnessed by the dominance games they play. (The fact that a lot of this play-acting might be due to the fact that the Free Fems have leisure and are incapable of reproducing parthenogenetically and there are no men allowed on the Plains is not to be considered seriously; nor is the fact that some women might actually

want to bear and raise children. The Mares toss all their children out on the Plains to survive as best they can until menarche when they can join society.) Perhaps children are no more people than are men.

All in all I was appalled by the lack of caring in this novel. Women have sex with other women but it's hardly more meaningful emotionally than Alldera's rape experience. All this novel proves to me is that gender is of no account in the make-up of a brutal, chauvinistic society. Be warned.

THE BEGINNING PLACE
By Ursula K. LeGuin
Harper & Row, Jan. 1980, \$8.95
Reviewed by Susan M. Shwartz

LeGuin calls this sort of story a psychomorph, a statement, divorced from our own world, or the values we long to find in it. In THE BEGINNING PLACE, Hugh and Irena are young Californians who hate the waste lands in which they live -- Hugh as a supermarket checker with a mentally ill mother who doesn't want him, but doesn't want him to go either; Irena, the daughter of a woman whose second husband is just what the sociology texts warn you against, fence, wifebeater, oversexed. These two profoundly alienated people discover the beginning place, a creek in perpetual twilight, a path leading to a Mountain Village of beauty, dignity and solidity separately.

Hugh gets there after Irena; his coming disrupts the fantasy life she has built up as a daughter of the village and reveals the relationship she has had with its mayor to be a sham. He falls in love with the lord of the village's daughter. Both discover they share a quest: to rid the village of the fear that blocks it from the rest of its two-



lit world. Symbolically, this fear is expressed in a dragon which Hg's patient strength, and Irena's desperate courage kill together. The adventure brings them together as comrades in danger, then as lovers -- but it removes them forever from the town they both love. That town is their beginning; it is not their life. Life lies back in the land they have left, and to which -- with great pain -- they return to establish a life together.

Tembrebrezi, the beginning place, is not a place they can stay, but it gives them a place to start building a new life which one knows will be productive. LeGuin's story concerns escape from alienation, past wish-fulfillment back into the light of day. It is mystical, yet tough: LeGuin is at home stylistically with the stream of consciousness of a half-hypnotized, anesthetized store clerk or the high solemnities of a quest through the wilderness. The story is about the destruction of horror -- of many sorts -- and the beginning of love. It is not as magical as her Earthsea books, but it is a gentle, profound and profoundly moving book.

It resembles the works of two people -- Marge Percy's WOMEN ON THE EDGE OF TIME in which a mentally ill Chicano uses her passionately wished-for "escape town" to resolve problems in this world (the cost being her own destruction) and Andre Norton's YEAR OF THE UNICORN, in which a young displaced woman discovers power, love and her own life in Norton's private Witch World, a series of fantasy adventures. Unlike Percy, LeGuin never preaches and she is a better stylist and deeper thinker than Miss Norton.

THE BEGINNING PLACE is neither fantasy nor mainstream novel; it is truth, in the sense that myth is truth. LeGuin has caught the fantasy that so many of us share -- finding a place that is right to stand and from it, changing our world. Like all her other works, this one deepens our understanding of our own lives and the lives of others around us. She makes people and places seem new and very precious.

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT WANTS YOU
By Harry Harrison
Bantam, pb, '79, 155 pp., \$1.95
Reviewed by Martin Morse Wooster

Harry Harrison has had an oddly two-faced writing career. On the one hand, he has his late Campbellian facet as a spinner of literate

space adventures, such as the Death-world series and PLAQUE FROM SPACE. Harrison's other knack is for anarchic crackpot comedy, ranging from the hilarious TECHNICOLOR TIME MACHINE to the putrid STAR SMASHERS OF THE GALAXY RANGERS. The Stainless Steel Rat series, of which this is the fourth, shows Harrison's talents at best advantage, abounding in quick action and quicker jokes.

Our hero, "Slippery Jim" di Griz, is able, through his immense ability in crime, to make his fortune in an increasingly egalitarian world. Over the years he has acquired a wife and two children, with equal abilities in larceny and vice. He has also acquired a profession, working as a super-secret agent for the Special Corps, nonchalantly saving the universe.

In THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT WANTS YOU, we find di Griz busily chasing after his wife, who has been kidnapped by the sinister bureaucrats of the Interstellar External and Internal Revenue. Di Griz quickly gets arrested after a libertarian orgy of tax record smashing, and rejoins the Special Corps. For the galaxy is once again threatened; the loathsome creatures of the universe have gathered together to stomp out beautiful people and make the world safe for filth. But the turds of space have not flushed together by themselves; sinister forces are pulling the levers ...

The problem with this novel is that Harrison is unable to develop a consistent tone, relying intermittently on serious and comic modes, mixed together without rhyme or reason. The novel begins with sixty pages of comedy, as di Griz, dressed in a warty dinosaur suit, tries to act repulsive and thus gain the aliens' respect. (To give an idea of Harrison's humour, two of the aliens' names are Gar-Baj and Sess-Pula.)

The next third of the novel turns abruptly to grim action on an ice planet, and the novel ends confusedly, a runaway locomotive that Harrison cannot slow down. In the conclusion Harrison is reminiscent of Philip Jose Farmer, continuing a trend begun in the Farmer pastiche THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT SAVES THE WORLD.

THE STAINLESS STEEL RAT WANTS YOU is not a bad book, mind you; it's just not on a par with the witty STAINLESS STEEL RAT. The novel is science fictional junk food, pure entertainment with absolutely no redeeming social values.

THE DEAD ZONE
By Stephen King
Viking, 1979, 426 pp., \$11.95
Reviewed by Steve Lewis

Question: Do you believe that after spending four and a half years in a coma it's possible for the victim of an automobile accident to recover? And what if he were to wake up with the psychic ability to read your past, your present and your future with just a single touch of his hand?

Writers of science fiction over the years have told very much the same story many times before. Stephen King, author of GARRIE, THE SHINING and THE STAND, among other horrors and fantasies, travels the well-worn paths of those before him, but with a realism, a nostalgia, a finger to the pulse of Smalltown, America, that makes one wonder what alternate time-track of history we've somehow been shuttled onto. After all, we've gone through VietNam, Watergate and the Nixon pardon together. Am I the only one who can't remember Johnny Smith? And I know



I should remember Greg Stillson, who eventually became Johnny's single-minded reason for living. As a novel that takes place in the immediate past as part of our common history, it can't all be forgotten and forever irretrievable in my own dead zone, now can it?

Question: Are we really supposed to believe that an itinerant Midwestern Bible salesman could be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives with a staff and a bodyguard detail consisting of a coterie of former motorcycle freaks? On a platform of anti-governmentism, anti-welfarism, anti-Arabian, and pro-heterosexism?

No. But nobody believed that Hitler meant what he said in 'Mein Kampf' either, did they? Greg Stillson is a former revival minister, a former snake oil salesman, a former house painter and real estate salesman, and he's heading straight for the White House. Johnny Smith shakes his hand, and visions of Armageddon immediately overwhelm him.

Question: "If you could jump into a time machine and go back to 1932, would you kill Hitler?"

Question: What kind of a piker is a God who lets Johnny Smith do his dirty work for Him?

This is a religious fantasy, a political manifesto and a last-ditch showdown. How can such smooth readability have so sharp an edge to it? After reading Stephen King, many a would-be author is going to end up with a permanent case of writer's block and throw his typewriter away in disgust. Or maybe they won't, and they should.

AN EXERCISE FOR MAIMEN

By Barbara Paul
Berkley 03809-2, c. 1978, Berkley
edn. July 1978, 168 pp., \$1.50

Reviewed by Steve Lewis

After reading and immensely enjoying *PILLARS OF SALT*, Paul's excursion into time travel published last year by Signet, I was prompted to take a trip backward in time myself. This is her first novel, and it's probably out of print, but if you missed it, the effort in tracking it down will be well worth it. Or if you bought it new, like I did, and stored it away unread, like I did, by all means dig it out. Barbara Paul is definitely a writer worth reading.

In a way, this first book is not science fiction at all, but an allegorical fantasy. Never made clear are the motives of the eudae-

monistic alien who deliberately disrupts the clockwork rhythm of life on Pythia, an entire planet devoted to scientific experimentation. He comes; he proselytizes; and like a celestial appleseder, he leaves again, immediately following an outrageous (and enormously stimulating) display of rampant priapism that leaves the planet shattered.

Earlier, we get a glimpse, a convincing touch of empathy with character Jennie Geiss, of the sort of isolation felt by a non-scientist set adrift in a dedicated scientific community with no skills nor purpose. You might also conclude that it's the same isolation felt by any outsider, in any context.

Afterward, we get a semi-lecure on the futility of ever opposing the bestial side of nature. But please don't misunderstand. It's not a statement, I suspect, that will appeal to unreconstructed hedonists very much at all.

DR. WHO #1-6: DR. WHO AND THE DAY OF THE DALEKS, by Terrance Dicks, DR. WHO AND THE DOOMSDAY WEAPON by Malcolm Hulke, DR. WHO AND THE DINOSAUR INVASION by Hulke, DR. WHO AND THE GENESIS OF THE DALEKS, by Dicks, DR. WHO AND THE REVENGE OF THE CYBERMEN by Dicks and DR. WHO AND THE LOCH NESS MONSTER by Dicks.

Pinnacle Books, \$1.75, paperback. Introduction by Ellison, each book.

Reviewed by Patricia Russo

These are the first American appearances of a popular series of books in England. Based on the BBC television program that is now being shown in syndication around the United States, these books focus on the adventures of a certain Dr. Who and his various traveling companions.

The books are enthusiastically introduced by Harlan Ellison, who does one of the finest selling jobs I have ever read. After seeing the show and reading these books, I must say I agree with him. This isn't great literature, but it is excellent entertainment.

The action is quick and continuous, with clear-cut good guys and bad guys, as in most books written initially or primarily for youngsters. But, for a change, the good guys do not automatically win. There is real danger for the characters as they try to save the universe, or their corner of it. Sometimes, the Doctor does not succeed.



The action is sprinkled throughout with memorable lines of dialogue, many of them comic. The impact of the lines is greater if you have seen the program and can imagine Tom Baker, who portrays the Doctor to perfection, performing them.

The books are short and make fast, pleasant reading. Wrap up a handful of them for your favorite kid for his birthday -- after you've read them yourself. A quick reader can get through one in less than two hours, and a child with a short attention span will find no dense paragraphs of description and exposition to turn him off.

The one thing I would wish on the authors is a little more basic knowledge of storytelling -- things like consistent viewpoints, or even what a viewpoint is, and the uses and non-uses of the second person singular pronoun.

If you have seen the show and want to enjoy further adventures of the Doctor, or have fond memories of Doc Savage and his band, pick up one of these books and try it.

THE ROAD TO INFINITY

By Isaac Asimov
Doubleday, 1979, \$8.95

Reviewed by Susan M. Schwartz

I have been hooked on Isaac Asimov's essays for half my life. *THE ROAD TO INFINITY* contains seven-

teen essays, most of which were first published in the MAGAZINE OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION on topics as diverse as grammar and Antarctica, black holes and personal immortality (he's not buying it). Some of the essays were a lot more interesting to me, personally, than others: I tend to read articles on cosmology or philosophy with a lot more relish than I do essays on logarithms. But even when Asimov is dealing with the complexities of mathematics figured according to different bases, he is able to explain them winningly -- and without patronizing oversimplification -- to the educated nonscientist. Possibly he is the greatest popularizer of science around, and it comes out in these essays, which are clear, spectacularly organized, and written in lucid conversational English.

The essays are also quite amusing. An attack on Bible-believers may occasion an essay or two on scientific observation, or Asimov may explain black holes by trying to show how someone of his (considerable) girth might be reduced to one. Throughout each glints the personality -- amably egotistical, polemical and rather charming -- or Asimov himself: I learned a lot about his idiosyncrasies, his family life, his work and his colleagues while reading about the South Pole, the planets, the stars, and life after death. The essays expand outward from Earth to infinity, but they seem to return always to revolve about Asimov himself.

This is a book for browsing and rereading, for trying to keep up with the frontiers of human knowledge -- explained in humane terms. I've read such collections before with pleasure, and I'll happily read the one which will inevitably follow this one.

WONDER WORKS, SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY ART

By Michael Whelan
 Edited by Polly and Kelly Freas
 Donning Company, 1979, 5041 Admiral Wright Rd, Virginia Beach, VA, 23462.

1979, 120 pp., \$7.95

Reviewed by W. Ritchie Benedict

Science fiction has always been an intensely visual form of literature, perhaps more so than any other genre. You had to have a strong visual imagination to conceive of some of the fantastic vistas that the authors were trying to paint upon the canvas of your mind. In the early days of SF, the pulp magazine covers were the only stim-

ulus you had to activate that mental component. Today, there are so many talented artists in the field who make a point of paying attention to detail, color and composition, that it makes me wonder how we ever got along without them years ago. If you wander into any bookstore, you are literally dealing with a mini-art gallery, and the sale of books dealing exclusively with SF art has become a full-time business.

You may not recognize the names of some of the artists but you will certainly recognize their work (as that may have decided you to purchase a book in the first place.) Kelly Freas is one of the best known SF artists and as such is qualified as a judge to know talent when he sees it. Both Kelly and his wife Polly provide the introduction to this selection of color paintings, while science fiction veteran, Paul Anderson, comments on that aspect.

There are three editions to choose from, this regular paperback book, a trade edition in hardback for \$13.95 and a limited signed and numbered boxed set for \$30.

The paintings cover six fundamental SF subjects: Science Fiction, Sword and Sorcery, Romantic Fantasy, Horror, Heroines and Aliens. I will not presume to describe any in detail because the appeal of good SF art is personal and subjective. You will have your favorites as I will have mine, but there will be something to touch an emotional chord in everyone. I find it incredible to note that the artist, Michael Whelan, is not yet 30 years old. If he is this good now, what will he be like in another 25 years?

It should be mentioned that each section is introduced by an author whose works Mr. Whelan has illustrated. These include such names as Michael Moorcock, Alan Dean Foster, Anne McCaffrey, Gerald W. Page and C.J. Cherry.

The books the illustrations cover include: CITY, THE BLOODY SUN, LITTLE FUZZY, SWORDS AND ICE MAGIC, THE WHITE DRAGON, ENSIGN FLANDRY and THE TROUBLE WITH TYCHO. There are well over 50 illustrations along with comments by the artist (and his biography).

The Donning Company has been making a name for itself in the field of SF art (they also have a book with the work of Kelly Freas) and it will be interesting to see what new talents they display in the future.

URSHURAK
 By Hildebrant/Nicholls
 Bantam Books

Reviewed by Susan M. Shwartz

Seeking vengeance for the murder of his family, Hugh Oxhine rescues an elven prince, Ailwon, from rat-beasts and takes him to the home of an ancient wizard where he meets dwarfs, elves and a beast called a Gwarby, all leagued against Gorta the witch who herself serves the Deathlord, a renegade Elf. The story ranges all over the land of Ursurak as these people, aided by another magician, the fabled city of Amazons, a Tavern-Meet of dwarfs whose motto is "Liberty - Solidarity - Tomfoolery", and some miscellaneous elven lords seek vengeance on Gorta, then battle the Deathlord and his traitorous elf lieutenant Decided, who commands the Vilder-ones. They attain the Crownhelm, with which Ailwon is crowned, kill the Deathlord and unify the land after a number of battles, a good deal of miscellaneous lore and a lot of random capital letters.

Counterpointing the narrative is the characterization. A lot is made of doing versus being, of the value of intuition, of trust and regard as opposed to suspicion, sexism, and being closed-off. Valuable points all, were they not presented as preaching. My main problem with URSHURAK is that it creates no magic. It presents all the elements (including some magnificent color plates), but due to the awkwardness of the writing which abounds in clichés and vague generalities, it must rely on describing and not evoking it. This book attempts to follow Tolkien or perhaps Stephen Donaldson. In my opinion, it isn't even as good as Terry Brooks' SWORD OF SHANNARA. Just one more attempt to cash in on the market for heroic fantasy -- I'm surprised Bantam took it.

As indicated earlier, the illustrations are as beautiful as I've come to expect from the Hildebrants. The intricate plot is worked out, but it's so predictable I hardly cared.

LOADED WITH MOOPESHOT:



AM AIM TO CRITIQUE YOUR REVIEWER WITH MY SIX-FIGURE MEAN.

MASTERS OF EVERON
By Gordon R. Dickson
Ace, '80, trade pb, 237 pp., \$4.95
Reviewed by Martin Morse Wooster

The major conflict in Gordon Dickson's work is that between frontiers and interiors. The frontier, for Dickson, can either be a society (underwater in THE SPACE SWIMMERS and ON THE RUN; interplanetary in NONE BUT MAN and THE OUTPOST-ER) or the mind, as in the further evolution of humanity (THE PRITCHER MASS) or a combination (the Dorsai series). It is the continued emphasis on one plot that makes Dickson, for all his ability, a writer of the second rank.

MASTERS OF EVERON confirms Dickson's weaknesses as a writer without replicating his virtues. The novel is set on the frontier planet Everon, a planet trying to establish its own identity against a domineering Earth. Jef Robini, member of the Ecolog Corps, goes to Everon to determine who killed his brother. Robini is also determined to restore Mikey, his pet maolot (a sort of mutant ocelot) to the world from which he came. Robini arrives on Everon, and is quickly thrust into a war between ranchers and farmers, both of whom wish to use the rich soil of Everon for their own ends. After learning that certain government officials are not what they seem, Robini realises that all his problems converge upon one another, thus providing a tidy, if thunderous, climax.

Dickson has translated a Western plot into science fiction. The morphology is quite exact: Robini is a ranger, the maolot is a coyote, Everon is the Great Plains and the ranchers and farmers are ranchers and farmers. Dickson has done Western plots before, in his first years as a writer and with better results, in the novella "Ancient, My Enemy". Unfortunately, this plot is both painfully simple and painfully blatant; one moans at Dickson's unerring tendency to replicate every cliché of the Western in the first three-quarters of the book. Only the last quarter is truly science fiction, and only the last ten pages show Dickson at anywhere near his top form.

The concluding chapters build to an oddly mystical climax that one who has plodded through the first three-quarters of the book would not be led to expect. The ending almost succeeds because of its audacity, until one realizes that Dickson's conclusion is a fuzzy carbon of other, better novels. (Even the maolot for much of the book is a Hoka with sharper claws.)

MASTERS OF EVERON, however minor, is nonetheless as much a statement of Dickson's philosophy as the far more important THE FAR CALL. Everon, however, is not in THE FAR CALL's class, and is Dickson's worst novel since his dreadful juveniles of the mid-1960s. Considering the talent of the author, it is a shame that this novel is so trite and simplistic. Dickson has, and will, do better.

MOCKINGBIRD

By Walter Tevis

Doubleday, 1980, 212 pp., hardcover.

Reviewed by William Gibson

In the future, people will smoke so much marijuana, and pop so much Valium and so many sopors, and be so heavily into meditating and mindless hedonism and the whole selfish Me Generation trip that, like, stupid robots will be doing all the real work. And robots are pretty insensitive, right? So they'll just feed people a lot of really nasty synthetic junkfood, like algaeburgers and stuff, probably full of chemicals, and generally America will look like a neoconservative's worst nightmare of Woodstock. To make it even worse, a malfunctioning plot-element will spike all the dope and downers with contraceptives, as well as sterilizing all the women at an early age.

Well, almost all, but I don't want to give the plot away.

Anyway, people will forget the really important things in life, like the nuclear family and reading, and it'll just be really dull all the time. Virtually the only sympathetic character in the while country will be a super-intelligent robot with a wonderful metal brain in the cloned body of a majestic black man. He's been alive for hundreds of years and doesn't want to be, and to make things worse, the factory left off his penis. But don't worry, because it all has a happy ending and it's really uplifting. Particularly if you were crazy about FAHRENHEIT 451, JONATHAN LIVINGSTON SEAGULL and LOVE STORY.

The weird thing is, I liked it. Seriously. It's a cornball, but it isn't kitsch, and it's genuinely passionate in its way. Tevis is some kind of gifted storyteller, and in spite of all the creaky Future Archaic technology, and a narrative texture that often suggests some strange marriage of the earliest form of American Naturalism with Horace Gold's GALAXY, it works.

Okay, what *did* people used to do at night?



I don't think it's the book that will save your kids from the next Jim Jones, but it won't do them any harm, either....

How can anyone dislike a novel with sentences like "I was boiling synthetic eggs at the nuclear stove, on the one burner that worked?"

THE MAN FROM NOWHERE

By Frank Hampson

Trade paperback, 1979,
Dragon's Dream, Nijverheidsweg 46,
Postbus 212, 3340 AE Hendrik-Ido-
Ambacht, Netherlands

Reviewed by James J.J. Wilson

This is the first volume in a series of books of the adventures of Dan Dare, Pilot of the Future. Dan Dare was one of the most famous British comic strips of the 50s and certainly among the most popular SF characters ever produced in Britain. For years the stores were filled with Dan Dare toys and other items and scientists argued heatedly over the current week's installment. This is due to the clever and logical writing, the scientific accuracy (Arthur C. Clarke was one of the advisors), and the beautifully realistic and colorful artwork of Frank Hampson. I cannot overstate the latter. My only prior exposure to this character consisted of two pages of reprints in David Kyle's 1975 book, A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SCIENCE FICTION. Those two pages were enough to make me remember the names Dan Dare and Frank Hampson for four

years and to become very excited when I saw the book. This book lives up to my every expectation.

Dan Dare was created by Frank Hampson in 1950 as the lead feature in what was to become Britain's most popular comics magazine, EAGLE. Soon children and adults alike were anxiously awaiting each weekly issue. Frank Hampson did the strip until 1959 and it continued until EAGLE's demise in 1969. The strip is also a current feature of the British weekly, 2000 A.D. but the stories and artwork were never to equal the quality or the popularity of those that Frank Hampson did in the 50s. This first volume reprints, I assume, the first years' installments (the book contains 46 to be exact).

The book is of extremely high quality printing and materials and would definitely be of interest to enthusiasts of SF, art, comics or people who are just curious to find out what got everybody so excited about thirty years ago.

GOD OF TAROT

By Piers Anthony
Jove/HBJ Books, \$1.75, 1979

Reviewed by Lynn C. Mitchell

To eerie music of Sant-Saens' DANSE MACABRE, skeletons materialize in an ominous dance of death. On this planet Tarot, strange apparitions from the arcane Deck of Tarot terrorize colonists whose lives ironically center around the Tarot. Sent to locate the origin of these animations, Brother Paul quickly learns that his mission also includes determining God's role in these threatening manifestations. When Paul conjures a Tarot animation, he penetrates the mystical arcanum only to discover himself a heroic 'fool' trapped within the borders of this ancient domain.

The theological design of GOD OF TAROT dominates the novel. The many schismatic sects band together only for survival on this harsh planet. And despite their religious differences, these sects all worship the eternal Tree of Life as the One God. However, the presence of animated Tarot symbols generates a theological crisis for the planet Tarot and the entire universe. If God is manifesting these perverse and often murderous animations, then the moral nature of God becomes questionable. And the consequences of this speculation threatens the foundations of modern religions.

When Paul enters the Tarot arcanum to both understand and control

these animations, he participates in the apparent perversions of traditional religious symbols. For example, the Holy Grail no longer symbolizes Eucharistic Sacrifice but instead animates a woman's sexual organs. The Grail now contains the shameful secrets of Brother Paul's earlier debauched life.

Not a phibemous satire of religion, GOD OF TAROT commands a serious analysis into the nature of God and man's own theological destiny. Paul's descent into this Tarot Hell first eradicates his conventional morality. But once this base line is achieved, his visions revitalize the underlying premises of religion -- knowledge of self and of will. Without self knowledge and an educated will, man will never transcend the shallow prescriptions of his transient life.

This initial book of a longer Tarot trilogy establishes the challenge of Tarot. But GOD OF TAROT also invites us to dynamic adventure -- to a quest that synthesizes man's requisite spiritual impulse with the primal forces of his original folly.

DESTINATION MOON

By Robert A. Heinlein
Edited by David G. Hartwell
Gregg Press Science Fiction Series
G.K. Hall & Co., 1979, \$15.00

Reviewed by Tom Staicar

In 1948, Robert A. Heinlein went to Hollywood with the intention of selling a producer on the idea of a film about a trip to the Moon. The working title was ROCKET STORY, loosely based upon Heinlein's novel ROCKET SHIP GALILEO. He above all wanted the film to be a serious, scientifically accurate look at the future of space exploration for the average filmgoer.

This special Gregg edition was assembled by David G. Hartwell and includes Hartwell's introduction which sets the film in perspective. When the film was released, the idea of a trip to the Moon was still a wild, way-out daydream that was dismissed as "science fiction".

Heinlein's original novella "Destination Moon" is reprinted from the September, 1950 issue of SHORT STORY MAGAZINE and is amusing but not one of his best works. The volume also includes a reprint of the article "Shooting Destination Moon" which Heinlein wrote for the July, 1950 issue of ASTOUNDING SCIENCE FICTION. In it, he explains the problems encountered in this early SF film,

as sincere efforts were made to keep everything accurate and plausible with special effects to match. Such solutions as the use of auto headlights on a black background for stars are tributes to the ingenuity of these pre-STAR WARS filmmakers.

At one point, Heinlein fought a move by the "powers-that-be" to improve upon the "cold" script in order to boost audience appeal. The new script, created with the aid of an unnamed musical comedy writer, included dude ranches, guitars and cowboys on the Moon, along with "a trio of female hepsters singing into a mike". The new script was never used, largely through the determination of Heinlein and others involved to keep the script serious.

"Facts About Destination Moon" is a booklet reproduced in the volume, along with twelve pages of stills from the film. The booklet is unintentionally hilarious, with its overblown prose and 1950s emphasis on military preparedness and tough-guy national strength: We are told that "he who controls the Moon controls the Earth" and, "If any foreign spies were snooping around on the set, their reports to headquarters should at least be interesting".

The Gregg Press edition of DESTINATION MOON is rather slim for \$15.00 but is a valuable historical document of interest to libraries, Heinlein collectors and SF film buffs.

FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND

Read by Brian Aldiss
Produced by Graham Goodwin
Listen for Pleasure Tape
TC-LFP 80053/54 £4.95 UK

Reviewed by Steven Edward McDonald

This is the second production of FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND -- the first was a BBC dramatization of the book, excerpts from which appeared on record in the States (textual links from the book were read by Aldiss). This is handled as a straight reading, and the text, apart from the abridgement, is unchanged. Aldiss does a very professional job of reading the main text, and utilizes several techniques to make the characters come alive -- there is nothing flat about the reading, and if Aldiss wasn't a top SF writer, he would probably have a future in radio (if not on stage). An excellent job, and one worth the effort of obtaining for a listening.

SMALL PRESS NOTES

BY THE EDITOR

EARTHLOVE by Neil McAleer
Strawberry Hill Press. \$7.95.
616 44th Av.,
San Francisco, CA 94121

A young married couple on vacation are kidnapped by an all-powerful intergalactic "female" entity and voyaged through the universe in a transparent globe to visit a few planets and meet some strange creatures. In the end the young woman's space-impregnated embryo is taken by EF (Expanding Field---the name of the all-powerful) for use in spreading human love through the seavagram. The couple are then returned to Earth an hour or so after they had been taken.

A long novel, full of juvenile nice-nice behavior, love, LOVE, LOVE! and characterless, personality-empty information-only dialogue.

It is full of scientific howlers and astronomical license. It is a novel of great sincerity, great Message and great boredom.

I did not believe a word of it past chapter one, and you won't, either, if you make the mistake of reading it.

SHAYOL #3

Edited by Patricia Cadigan
Published by Flight Unlimited,
1100 Countyline Road, Bldg. #29,
Kansas City, KS 66103

A very interesting and well-done quality magazine devoted to sf and fantasy. Superior graphics, printing, etc. New stories by Lisa Tuttle, Michael Bishop, Tom Reamy, Tanith Lee... Cover and interior art is of high-professional quality. [In fact, the Richard Corben painting illustrating Lee's "A Hero at the Gates" could not be published by any of the existing prozines: much too erotic.]

There are articles, features, departments...all excellent.

One problem: SHAYOL comes out about once a year.

MANUALS ON MAYHEM---A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE LITERATURE OF CRABT MARTIAL ARTS AND SERIOUS SELF-DEFENSE by Bradley J. Steiner
Loompanics Unlimited, \$6.00.
POB 264, Mason, MI 48854.

There is an astonishingly large literature [how-to manuals] on how to kill another human being with hands and hand weapons. Necessarily



sarily a lot is said about defending oneself with those weapons.

What Steiner has done is briefly describe these books and manuals and give a short review/judgment of their quality.

The categories are: Traditional Martial Arts Books With A Combat Orientation; Military Combat Texts; Police Texts; and Civilian Defense Instruction Publications.

These books are invaluable to a writer if he's writing S&S, detective, spy, war...almost any action-adventure story. And futuristic science fiction weapons can be imagined from a reading of some of these books.

This book is a pointer---and worth the price to find out which books you want/need for reference.

THE BLACK WOLF by Galad Eliflandsson
Illustrated by Randy Broecker
Grant, \$12.00.

Donald M. Grant, Publisher, West
Kingston, RI 02892

In his introduction, Charles M. Collins thinks Galad Eliflandsson is a fine, upcoming writer with a special way of telling a Lovecraftian horror tale.

Well... He's competent. This not-quite-novel-length story of a terror-filled rural town in New England, a cursed family, a Terrible Secret, a young out-of-state visitor/hero...is so-so. It has some suspense, some horror, some good characterizations. But it is formula and when you use a trite old formula you'd better make the specifics extra-good, distinctive, and solid.

This is a fair read.
Ahhh, but what makes the book worth buying are the really fine Broecker ink drawings. These

full-pageers are marvels of talent and skill; he does more for the story than the author. The dust jacket color painting is especially great.

TALES OF THE WEREWOLF CLAN-VOL.1
By H. Warner Munn
Illustrated by Jeff K. Potter
Grant, \$12.00

A saga---gruesome, bloody, stark and savage, of a family cursed to be hounded to death by an alien magically bound to Earth by ancient spells. This "demon" hates mankind and especially the descendants of Wladislaw Brenryk, who offended it mightily in the Sixteenth Century.

These stories trace the fates of those men and women down through the centuries as they struggle to evade that thing they have come to know as the Master.

In this volume the clan is still barely alive, as a condemned witch in colonial New England gives birth to a boy before she is hanged.

I liked these stories for their unflinching look at Medieval life---the brutality, the religious fanaticisms, the ignorance, the horrible cruelty of man to man and woman.

The alien creature is said to be responsible for most of these tides of evil, but that is a narrative convenience and perhaps a humanist's unconscious evasion of history and the vicious side of humanity faced with lifetimes of unremitting war, starvation, disease, despair.

I look forward to volume two of these chronicles. H. Warner Munn writes highly effective prose.

The dj, frontispiece, and full-page interior illustrations by Jeff K. Potter are exceptionally well done, evocative, professional.

LOVECRAFT'S PROVIDENCE & ADJACENT PARTS by Henry L.P. Beckwith, Jr.
Donald M. Grant, Publisher \$10.
West Kingston, RI 02892

For those who want to sink into the place where HE wrote... Maps and drawings and photos of the small city...where HE walked...and houses which HE used in HIS MIND to write his horror stories....

It's all well done, and for Lovecraft completists, a necessary reference and aid to appreciation.

STARSHIP #57 (WINTER 79-80)
\$2.25. Edited and published by Andrew Porter, POB 4175, New York, NY 10017.

It gets better and better, including a stronger Porter presence and more nuts-and bolts inside-

information by Bob Silverberg, Fred Pohl, Vincent Di Fate, etc.

A very professional magazine in every respect. Beautiful full-color cover by C. Lee Healy.

ANARCHY COMICS #2

Last Gasp, \$1.25

POB 212

Berkeley, CA 94701

Edited by long-time sf fan and cartoonist, Jay Kinney, who in my opinion has misnamed this series: should be MOSTLY CLASS WAR COMIX, or ANTI-CAPITALIST COMIX...

That is the philosophical thrust of most of the strips and stories, not pure anarchism.

Granted, though---anarchists used to be considered communists, socialists, radicals...

Nowadays anarchists are often mistaken for hardcore Libertarians, I think, since they are both against any government anywhere, to any degree, under any conditions.

But ANARCHY COMIX is only against capitalistic governments. They even offer an oil painting poster of a Keene-eyed Mao, for \$3.50.

If you like heavy-handed propaganda, tunnel-minded philosophy, and a little good satire of the usual American Middle Class targets, here's your knee-jerk fodder.

ARCHIPELAGO by R.A. Lafferty

Manuscript Press, \$12.95

POB 51576

Lafayette, LA 70505

I read fifty pages and then gave up; Lafferty is in many ways a very idiosyncratic, private, frustrating writer. Usually there is a storyline in his works, a goal, a danger...something to hold a reader through the special Lafferty style and skewed (often delightful) reality he paints.

But this novel seemed to have no story. It is mostly about a man named Finnegan and friends and about incidents in their lives past and present.

If you are a Lafferty lover this is your meat. If not, this is a soporific.

THE HUMAN TERMITES by David H. Keller.

\$5.00
P.D.A. Enterprises, Box 8010, New Orleans, LA 70182

This is volume two of the David H. Keller Memorial Library series. Previously published is his THE LAST MAGICIAN: NINE STORIES FROM WEIRD TALES.

THE HUMAN TERMITES was suggested to Keller by Hugo Gernsback in 1929,

I believe, and was published in SCIENCE WONDER STORIES in that year.

The novel is structured in the manner of those years---a long (but interesting scientific [or pseudo-scientific]) preamble which sets up the conflict between an aged scientist who has spent decades studying termites in Africa, and the superior intelligences which control the termites and plan world conquest.

The old professor enlists the aid of a younger scientist, a rich, adventurous man, and the millionaire's lovely and smart sister.

They discover a parallel controlling super intelligence that is able to largely control groups of humans, and are quickly on the run from both the termite Masters as well as the secret human Masters.

This is (to my mild surprise) a good, exciting, interesting and informative reading experience. There are bonuses: reprinted Frank R. Paul illustrations, and some good new complementary drawings by Dixie Adkins. The Introduction by Patrick H. Adkins is absorbing, a revelation of Keller as well as the hectic world of 1929.

ASFA is the Association of Science Fiction Artists, and ASFA is also the title of their newsletter.

Anyone interested in sf/fantasy art (at any level) is welcome to join. Cost: US\$10 per year. To: Wilma Fisher, \$20 Hamilton Road, Merion Station, PA 19066.

The point of this mention is the disturbing information in the Jan./Feb. 1980 newsletter. Vincent Di Fate's Grievance Activities Report mentions several questionable practices by several publications and editors concerning payment practices, copyrights, rights purchased. Good nuts and bolts information any pro or amateur artist wants and needs.

But there is also a discussion of rumors about Ace/Grosset & Dunlap slipping into slow-pay practices again, and of Ace being sold---again.

There is also a discussion of rumors about Ace/Grosset & Dunlap slipping into slow-pay practices again, and of Ace being sold---again.

THE BLACK BOOK OF CLARK ASHTON SMITH

Illustrated by Andrew Smith

Arkham House Publishers, \$6.00

Sauk City, WI 53583

Handsomely published with a simple, heavy, leatherlike black cover, THE BLACK BOOK is literally the contents of Smith's journal, in which he recorded thoughts for stories, incidents, philosophy, observations about writing and writers, poetry, story titles for story series...

Clark Ashton Smith was at the

time of his publication in WEIRD TALES, a mysterious, awe-inspiring recluse who lived in a cabin in Auburn, California. He wrote such arcane fantasy, such dread tales of death and strange, occult, bizarre retribution...that readers and fans thought he must be a kind of sorcerer.

A few people knew him as he was, a gentle, quiet, learned, multi-talented man whose philosophy and life-style was zen-like in simplicity. He had a great, dark imagination and a fantastic command of words.

If you buy a copy of this book (a limited edition of 2500 copies, by the way) read the two memoirs about Smith by George F. Haas, first. They are absolutely vital to a full enjoyment of the journal which precedes them.

Andrew Smith's black ink renderings are well done.

A WEALTH OF FABLE by Harry Warner, Jr. Published by Joe D. Siclari, 4599 N.W. 5th Av., Boca Raton, FL 33431.

In three volumes, mimeographed, offset cover by Ross Chamberlain, Introduction by Wilson (Bob) Tucker, interior illustrations by Bob Shaw, Lee Hoffman, Ross Chamberlain, Sheryl Birkhead, Jackie Franke, Stu Shiffman, James Shull, Al Sirosi, Tim Kirk and Steve Stiles.

Price: \$10.00

Limited edition of 1000 retail copies and 100 review copies.

This is the history of science fiction fandom in the 1950s. And only Harry Warner, Jr. could have done it.

The 50s were an era! A kind of golden age. Major fans of the time were Terry Carr, Harlan Ellison, Bob Silverberg, Bob Tucker, and (in a lesser way) Richard Geis.

Ted White was just coming in. The major fans that did not go on to "superstar" status in science fiction were the ones who dominated 50s fandom: Walt Willis, Lee Hoffman, Dean Grennell...

I can't remember all; forgive me for forgetting... Shelby Vick... Vernon McCain... Keasler...

Fandom was small, intense, exclusive, full of hoaxes and feuds and wild happenings, almost all of



which were recorded/reported in the fanzines of that era.

It was an incredible time: I'm glad I lived through it.

Harry Warner, Jr. wrote ALL OUR YESTERDAYS, a history of sf fandom in the Forties. He was the only man who could have written A WEALTH OF FABLE. He did a magnificent job of both histories.

The task of writing the history of fandom's Sixties will have to be undertaken by someone else, however; Harry is not interested (and I don't blame him).

This third volume excellently mimed edition of A WEALTH OF FABLE is quite simply both an education and a collectors item; it will likely be the only edition and a copy will be Extremely Valuable one day.

I think every university library with any interest in science fiction should have a copy, for instance. The information in these pages is precious and should be recognized as such.

NEW WORLDS #215

Edited (this issue) by David Britton. \$2.00 or 1L from Bookchain Ltd., 18 Peter St., Manchester 2, England.

By far the most disciplined and coherent (an commercial) issue for a while, in a small limited edition of 1000 copies, #215 of NW is a writer's issue: by, for and about writing and writing, especially sf and fantasy writers.

Mike Moorcock analyzes Harlan Ellison's writing and psyche, leaves both hanging inside out on the line to dry, and makes both important and understandable.

M. John Harrison, in 'Notes From the Ivory Basement', laments the demise of the New Wave and sticks pins into the current body of sf writing and writers. No one escapes unpricked.

Michael Butterworth is more analytical and academic in 'A New Frog-The Origin of Frivolity and the Shape of the New Literature.' I think he's full of shit.

Heathcote Williams writes convincingly about Kirlian auras and photography---the latest poop---but I suspect special advocacy. It'd be nice if he was right.

And there's a Jerry Cornelius story, 'Niki Hoeky', by Charles Partington. Fascinating. Bizarre.

There is a P.J. Proby quote in large type on the back cover: "I AM AN ARTIST; AND SHOULD BE EXEMPT FROM SHIT."

Nonsense! Artists create most of the shit of this world, being at heart idealists. Realists and cynics spend most of their lives cleaning it up or avoiding it.

SFR is a small shovel in the effort.

THE ADVENTURE OF THE ELEVEN CUFF-BUTTONS by James Francis Thierry Aspen Press, \$6.50
POB 4119
Boulder, CO 80302

A broad burlesque of a Conan Doyle Sherlock Holmes tale, this novel, published in 1918 originally, is proof that even an obscure writer, barely a professional in sales, can have a form of immortality---by riding coattails.

The variation in this novel is that Holmes and Watson speak a lot of American slang, supposedly because they are just back (in England) from a three year stint in New York. In their Introduction, Tom and Enid Schantz suggest this is because Thierry didn't know enough English idiom to risk English dialogue. Their guess is probably correct.

This quality softcover (5-1/2 x 8-1/2) is very nicely illustrated by Rob Pudim. Limited edition of 1000 copies.

SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE, APR. 1980
Edited and published by Andrew Porter, POB 4175, New York, NY 10017.
Single copy: \$1.25

This issue has a scoop: 'Davis Publications Buys ANALOG.' And let us pat Andy on the back: his report a few months ago that ANALOG offices had been moved to a kind of 'Siberia' in the Conde Nast organization, and that this downgrading was a possible signal that ANALOG was to be sold, was a true reading of the event, notwithstanding the denials by all and sundry.

SF CHRONICLE is attractive, professional and news oriented. A reliable monthly, mailed first class.

WHISPERS 13-14

Edited and published by Stuart Davis Schiff, Box 1492-W, Azalea St., Browns Mills, NJ 08015.

This double issue, largely a tribute to Fritz Leiber, costs \$4.

WHISPERS, from the beginning, has featured superior fiction (professional-level), excellent artwork and a clear vision of intent with its fine package. Plainly, Stuart is a superior editor.

This issue is worth every cent with its full-color wraparound Stephen Fabian painting (with nothing but the logo to mar the snowscape with two Norsemen fighting with sword and battleaxe), the Leiber novelette, 'The Button Moulder' (very personal horror story), the Fabian 'Swords and Deviltry' folio, the look at Fritz the man and writer in 'Fritz Leiber Revisited: From Hyde Park to Geary Street' by James Wade....

There are stories by Compton, Cook, Lumsley, Zelazny...

WHISPERS is fantasy/horror oriented, and if that's your bag you've got to have this issue and others. There's much, much more in this issue to enjoy and appreciate. The weird, bizarre art folio of Vincent Napoli...the superbly grotesque inside front cover by John Stewart... Altogether, 128 pages plus covers.

There is a hardcover edition of this Leiber issue available: \$12.50; (\$10.00 to subscribers of WHISPERS).

WHIZZARD, SPRING 1980

Edited and published by Marty Klug 5730 Chatport Road, St. Louis, MO 63129. Single copy: \$2.

An extremely well-done comic fanzine featuring interviews with artists, writers, editors in the comic book, graphic story field. Articles on past comic greats and new projects. Letters, reviews, and a pro-quality comic strip, 'Musclebound for Glory.'

WHIZZARD is professionally printed, 48 pages, heavy covers.

QUESTAR, JUNE, 1980

I note that the February issue of this slick, all color quarterly had a \$2.00 price on the cover, and the June issue is \$1.95...changed no doubt to conform to a distributor demand...or to conform to the usual market psychology.

This (June) seventh issue is a better issue than last, which was an abject puff for BLACK HOLE. I see there is some cheesecake added---a section on Caroline Munro with a two-page spread---alas, no nude.

This magazine is widening its appeal with writer interviews---A.E. van Vogt---and personality profiles of Forrest J. Ackerman, Don Post, Sr., artist David Mattingly, and Lee Cole.

Features on recent sf developments, letters, book reviews, film news... Well done. The magazine is 60-75% sf/fantasy/horror film oriented. But is running a graphic story serial and I see that next issue it will have a sf story, too.

A good, entertaining mix. Not really in the small press category any longer, I think.

It is published by MW Communications, 247 Fort Pitt Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA 15222.

THE FOURTH WALL by N.A. Diaman Persona Press, \$5.00
POB 14022
San Francisco, CA 94114

Diaman is a rebel writer: he

doesn't believe in capitalizing names or using quotation marks to indicate dialogue. Well...the first word of each chapter is capitalized. Why, I haven't the faintest.

This technique is anti-reader, of course; any style or technique that makes it difficult for a reader to read and understand text is a mistake--unless the writer is intent on putting himself on display instead of his story. Every divergence from standard fiction mechanics is at base a LOOK AT ME! THINK ABOUT ME! play by the author, no matter how much he wraps himself in the rhetoric of Noble Literary Rebel or Experimenter.

The story in THE FOURTH WALL is short and cliched: Bret Hamilton is a secret non-conformist in a future society dominated by TV (the fourth wall of all apartments is a giant TV installation).

Bret is a maverick also because he reads books and knows some history. He's also homosexual, but that's beside the point.

This future society is almost entirely visual and oral--communication is by pictures and talk. Even numbers are being phased out. Almost everyone is a pillhead--uppers, downers, sleepers, etc.

The government is totally elitist, manipulative, and contemptuous of the people.

So what else is new?

All the action of THE FOURTH WALL takes place in a single day. It's a short book, 128 pages of skimpy text, very short chapters.

It is in the trade paperback format. Daman previously wrote ED DEAN IS QUEER, also published by Persona Press. He's working on a third book.

BLACK COLOSSUS

JEWELS OF GWAHLUR

Both by Robert E. Howard
Donald M. Grant, Publisher
West Kingston, RI 02892

[Limited editions, price unknown, but around \$12-\$15, I believe.]

These are the latest in the series of hardcover editions of Howard's Conan stories which Grant has been issuing for several years. I believe he eventually intends a complete collection of the Conan stories in these excellently produced editions.

Dean Morrissey, a very good artist, did seven full-page paintings for JEWELS OF GWAHLUR (and including "The Snout in the Dark" also a Conan story included in this volume).

Ned Dameron illustrated BLACK COLOSSUS (including "Shadows in the Moonlight") with four magnificent full-color two-page-spread paintings

and many, many single and double-page b/w illustrations. He is a superb craftsman and these efforts are rich, detailed, marvelous in their lush savagery; he's caught the spirit of Conan perfectly, I think.

These editions are for collectors and/or Howard enthusiasts. The Conan stories are pure REH--exciting, rapid, heroic, with a dash of sex...and a ladle of blood and guts violence.

XENOPHILE #42

Edited and Published by Nils Hardin
POB 9660

Kirkwood Branch
St. Louis, MO 63122

This is the big, fat 5th Anniversary Issue--152 pages plus covers--with exceptionally good articles about pulp collecting, its writers, its major (and some minor) fictional heroes... An interview with Phil Farmer...articles about Leigh Brackett, Henry Kuttner and L. Ron Hubbard (his pulp writing career)... Much more.

This issue is priced at \$2. and is a bargain if you are into old book and magazine collecting, or nostalgia.

GROUND ZERO #1 \$1.50

Edited/published by Richard Dorsett
2719 E. 22nd,
Austin, TX 78722

An idiosyncratic 40 page off-set zine of catholic taste, as they often say. The two items of note are a segment of HALF A SKY, an unpublished novel by R.A. Lafferty, and an article, "Hollywood's Shadow Cinema" by Louis Black, which discusses the unnoticed and unknown gems in the vast wasteland of "B" movies and exploitation films.

THRUST #14 [Winter 1980] \$1.95

Edited and published by Doug Fratz
11919 Barrel Cooper Court
Reston, VA 22091

A pretty damn good semi-pro sf mag, subtitled "Science Fiction in Review", which keeps the reader busy with Ted White, Barry Malzberg, Charles Sheffield, Michael Bishop, an interview with J.G. Ballard, letters, some reviews....

Doug has steadily improved his zine, but still makes the stupid mistake of hiding his address in small print, doesn't put his address on the subscription coupon he prints, and doesn't put his address with the invitation to send it classified ads. That is counterproductive.

THRUST is 52 pages, off-set, SFR-size pages. He even has 7 Gilliland cartoons!

FANTASY NEWSLETTER #23-24 [Apr.-May]
Edited and published by Paul C. Allen
1015 W. 36th St.,
Loveland, CO 80537

Paul has established (apparently) a policy of having a large Fabian cover each issue, a simple, non-screaming cover format, and 32 pages. In those 32 pages he covers the major fantasy and sf news, publishing news, prints an interview or two--Ramsey Campbell in the Apr. issue, Katherine Kurtz in May--has a column or two (and I'm glad to see Bill Warren has found a home for his movie news & reviews column after I decided I wanted to do it myself in SFR), and even, in May, is using a piece of fiction, "Carousel" by Paul Garcia Capella.

Of late FANTASY NEWSLETTER is becoming more a broad-interest magazine and abandoning its newsletter beginnings. Still, if he can continue to publish every month....

Oh, the single issue price is \$1.50.

Gad, according to the price schedules these other sf and fantasy magazines are sporting, I should ask \$2.75 to \$3.00 for SFR....

THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE

Vol. 4: Part of the Old Testament
By Larry Gonick \$1.25
Rip Off Press
POB 14158

San Francisco, CA 94114

This series gets better--and funnier--than ever. Gonick's accuracy and sly/slapstick humor is marvelous; you get the definite impression while reading/chortling that his view of history is probably more keen and plausible than what you find in textbooks.

NYCTALOPS #15 [Jan. 1980] \$2.50

Edited and Published by Harry O. Morris, Jr.
502 Elm St.,
Albuquerque, NM 87102

A big, glossy, arcane periodical devoted to H.P. Lovecraft and the Cthulhu mythos. Very fine artwork. Professional quality in every aspect.

EMPIRE--FOR THE SF WRITER #19 \$1.50
Mark J. McGarry, Editor & Publisher
Box 967
New Haven, CT 06504

Dedicated to helping writers in the sf genre. Those who help are: Charles Sheffield, Orson Scott Card, Steven G. Spruill, John Shirley, Darrell Schweitzer and others.

LETTERS

LETTER FROM WALLACE A. MC CLURE
11975 E. 187th
Artesia, CA 90701
25 Nov. 1979

'This letter's in answer to the card from George Warren in SFR #33, concerning the National Enquirer article about Soviet reports that pieces of an alien spacecraft were in orbit around the Earth. Well, I also happened to see that article while I was down at the local supermarket and think that I can shed some light on the subject.

'To recap the article briefly, the National Enquirer reported that they had heard of some Soviet reports that there was an alien spacecraft that had blown up in Earth orbit on December 18, 1955, leaving 10 pieces still in orbit, the largest being about 100 feet in diameter. Also, these "moonlets" were observed and tracked by an American scientist, John Bagby, who had calculated their orbits.

'The basis of these reports seems to be just one article in the astrophysical journal ICARUS, Volume 10 (1969), pages 1-10 entitled "Terrestrial Satellites: Some Direct and Indirect Evidence" and written by John P. Bagby of the Research and Development division of Hughes Aircraft Corporation. This article studied what appeared to be many sudden anomalies in the published data on orbital elements of artificial satellites. Bagby suspected that these sudden anomalies were due to a perturbing force from a passing natural satellite or satellites. From this data, he concluded that a parent body with an estimated diameter of 30 meters, orbiting the Earth at an orbital height of 14065 kilometers and an orbital eccentricity of .5, had broken up on 18 December 1955 into 10-20 small moonlets and these small moonlets were causing the sudden jumps in the published observational data on artificial satellites.

'This then, is the article from which almost all the reports of small natural moons of the Earth, or of pieces of an alien spacecraft circling the Earth come from. Note the close similarity to the National Enquirer article.

'There is however, a second article which should be read along with Bagby's. It is also in ICARUS Volume 19 (Aug. 1973) on pp. 547-549, and is entitled "Bagby's Phant-

om Moonlets". It is written by Jean Meus of Vereniging voor Sterrenkunde, Belgium, and is the most crushing rebuttal I have ever seen published anywhere.

'Meus begins by pointing out that Bagby used data that was approximate and sometimes in error. The strange anomalies Bagby saw in the GODDARD SATELLITE SITUATION REPORTS, and which comprise almost all of his evidence are shown by Meus to be merely the result of Goddard Space Center publishing old satellite ephemeris data until new data was available. Even from among this data Bagby used data that was obviously wrong. Eliminating these obviously incorrect and false observations, six observations are left from astronomical observations ranging from the 1940s to the 1960s. Somehow Bagby manages to combine these scattered observations and calculate the orbit of the parent body which caused the false observations. How? Bagby never shows how he accomplishes this, a task which has eluded other researchers!

'Even using Bagby's calculated orbit, John Meus shows that for these observations to have occurred, the moonlet before its breakup would have appeared to an observer on the Earth to have an astronomical brightness of about magnitude 1 -- rivaling the planets in splendor. If such a body existed, in such an orbit, then it is very, very unlikely it was not observed repeatedly.

'Finally, Meus shows that there is no way that the "interactions" between the supposed moonlets and the artificial satellites could have occurred -- if the moonlets had existed, and if the orbital data was correct in the first place. Gravity is too weak of a force, and Bagby invents an electrostatic or electromagnetic interaction which is also shown to be too weak. Every piece of data Bagby uses is overwhelmingly rebutted, and even his conclusions are shown to be wrong.

'The journal in which these two articles are published, ICARUS, is pretty widely distributed (I've seen it in every college science library I've looked in), and I'm surprised that so few others have bothered to look them up. Even so, when I first ran across these articles a couple of years ago, I was very disappointed. I can think of a lot of uses



for a 100 foot sphere of space junk in Earth orbit, and the idea of getting parts of wrecked interstellar spacecraft is extremely interesting. But alas ... I guess we'll have to just go on looking.'

((Well, thanks for the debunking, Wallace, though I'd prefer the mistakes and lies. So it goes.))

LETTER FROM KARL T. PFLOCK
SF WRITERS OF AMERICA
1002 Sun Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
Feb. 1980

'The second thing I turned to in SFR #34 was the Pinto review of the new Heinlein. Except to say that the guy seems well named given the nature of his review, I won't comment on his remarks re NUMBER because I haven't read anything more than what's been excerpted in OMNI. But if Pinto's observations on NUMBER are as off-base as ditto on FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD... I know that his comments re the "casual and overt bigotry" in FF reflect similar blame generated by others, but all that proves is that there are many, many dolts (ideologically lobotomized dolts) out there.

'Jesus H. Christ on a crutch! FREEHOLD is explicitly and implicitly antibigotry -- unless a rock-hard bias against granting any person -- regardless of race, creed, sex color, or national origin -- arbitrary power over others can be construed as bigotry.

'Can what I have suspected for a long time be true, that critic is the semantic equivalent of asshole?

'Whew! Geez, I think Malberg is right....'

((Peter Pinto may be wrong about Heinlein's freedom philosophy, but he is not wrong about THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST, Robert Heinlein's new novel which will be published by Fawcett in August this year in a classy trade paperback edition with many inside illustrations and the cover by Richard Powers, at \$6.95 per copy.

((When I read THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST I soon realized I was in an endless swamp of incredible, time-wasting, inane, malaprop, often lecturing dialogue. The novel must be 95-99% talk. It is very wearying. It is appalling. It is Heinlein playing with himself for 417 pages.

((If you use the "Joe Smith" test---would this have been publish-

ed if an unknown had written it--- the answer is NO! The Heinlein name got this mess published. It is often said in sports and in the writing game that you're underpaid in your prime years, and overpaid in your failing years. That is abundantly clear in this case.))

LETTER FROM FRED SINGER
Hanau American High School
APO New York 09165
Feb 2, 1980

'I am a science fiction fan, an unpublished writer and a social studies department chairman.

'I recently received someone else's rejected story by mistake, and read it with interest because I was curious about the kind of material that others are turning out. When I returned the manuscript to the writer, I gave her my opinion and invited her to evaluate my story.

'This exchange generated an idea which I am currently involved in, namely, to coordinate a manuscript exchange program between unpublished science fiction writers. I expect it to be interesting, entertaining, a learning experience and, hopefully, a little profitable.'

((The idea of unpublished or amateur sf writers critiquing each others mss. sounds good at first, and an independent viewpoint is often useful, but it's even better to have a professional opinion from a selling writer, a professional editor, or agent. Unfortunately, that costs even more than amateur opinions.))

LETTER FROM J.J. PIERCE
645 Central Avenue
Westfield, NJ 07090
Feb. 1980

'Well, I suppose I might as well plunk down my \$4 for STAR WHORES -- it's such an irresistible title, after all. Besides which, it may even provide some pointers for whoever does the sex scenes for REDMUFF THE SPACE PIRATE.

'It was interesting to see the review of THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST, and based on Heinlein's previous two books and the excerpts of BEAST in OMNI, I don't doubt the comments are right on target. I would, however, take exception to the gratuitous remark that books like this

are what you get when you ask for science fiction about "ideas". I don't think you'll find anyone who likes "ideas" in SF raving over THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST. When people talk about science fiction of old that had "ideas", they mean things like Heinlein's older classics. They mean things like Hal Clement's MISSION OF GRAVITY -- Shakespeare it isn't, but it makes the ideas into an entertaining story. And we still have good SF novels of ideas, dammit -- books like C.J. Cherryh's HUNTER OF WORLDS, for example. Nobody mentioned LeGuin's THE DISPOSSESSED in the same breath with anything from the Golden Age, but it was a novel of ideas, too -- which also happened to be full of admirable style and characterization. It is also true, however, that there is well-written SF nowadays that is sadly lacking in ideas -- reading it is sort of like eating good consommé when you'd rather have clam chowder. I could mention -- but why bother? Nobody would pay any attention, and I'm retired from feuding.

'Speaking of STAR WHORES, if a guild of prostitutes is needed for long flights through space, why wasn't it needed for long voyages at sea? Ah, but why spoil the fun! I get the impression that most porn isn't much fun any more. I made a random visit to one of the book stores on 42nd Street, and at least half the titles seemed to involve rape, bondage or sadomasochism. Another 40 per cent had to do with things like women getting it on with dogs, cats, horses, etc.; or being degraded into prostitution. Incest is still a popular topic. Only about 10 per cent -- at most -- of the books on display were just about people having fun fucking. No doubt the ratio is similar in Portland. So you could say the militant feminists have a point.

'And yet it must be perfectly possible to write porno without degrading women -- maybe some women would even read it, judging from the most-publicized studies of sexual fantasies and the recent rash of male strippers performing for female (as opposed to gay) audience. Maybe the women should write it; the best example I ever happened across, WAYS OF A WANTON WENCH, was a sort of Triple X-rated Jirel story allegedly (How can we know for sure, after all?) written by a woman named Madeleine LaGrange.'

((Obviously a sex guild was needed for long sea voyages, but just as obvious is the anti-sexual power of the Christian religion was too strong culturally and socially for

a sex guild to come into being. And just as obviously we've almost reached the point now where such a guild is possible.

(From a recent conversation I had with the editor of what may be the sole printed-porno market left in America, for writers, the requirements are simply wall-to-wall all-out sex, with graphic sexual detail in the orgasm scenes, and a constant flow of sexual reference and incident in the transitions from orgy to orgy. I could have written for him, but the offer was \$1,000 for 50,000 or more words, and all rights were purchased. Ten or fifteen years ago a thousand per book was pretty good (with royalties and etc., but now \$1,000 is less than \$500 worth of purchasing power, in 1965 terms. I refused the opportunity.)

(In my mind STAR WHORES is porno that does not degrade women. Unless you take the position that using your body and mind to do any thing for money is degrading, in which case all work is a disgrace and should be illegal.)

LETTER FROM DWIGHT R. DECKER
16 King Arthur Ct. #7
Northlake, IL 60164
15 Feb. 1980

'This is the first issue of SFR I've seen in a couple of years, so your current activities are news to me. Particularly STAR WHORES. By some sort of odd coincidence, I picked up a used copy of THE BEST FROM F&SF, EIGHTH SERIES (1959) just the other day, and C.S. Lewis's story "Ministering Angels" was prefaced as follows:

"Dr. Robert S. Richardson's controversial article, "The Day After We Land on Mars" -- first published in the SATURDAY REVIEW and later expanded for F&SF (Dec. 1955) -- contained the provocative prediction that 'we may be forced into first tolerating and finally openly accepting an attitude towards sex that is taboo in our present social framework ... To put it bluntly, may it not be necessary for the success of the project to send some nice girls to Mars at regular intervals to relieve tensions and promote morale?' C.S. Lewis takes it from there"

'You've probably read the Lewis story, so I won't go into it here. It was Richardson's comment that startled me and made me realize how attitudes have changed in 25 years. In the first place, any feminist who was worth her diploma from the Torquemada School of Sniffing Out Thoughtcrime would have jumped at

once on the implicit assumption that there wouldn't be any women involved in the Mars project except as prostitutes. No women scientists? No women technicians? Even granted an all-star crew on the first expedition, Richardson was talking about later trips -- and still no women except as factory-trained lust mechanics. In the second place, with space and fuel aboard spaceships at a premium (I suspect star travel is relatively cheap in STAR WHORES), I can't see the sponsoring agency allocating a sizeable drain on the life-support systems to relatively non-essential personnel. Possible solutions include the following:

- Send only crews of Jesuits.
- Send crews composed of married couples -- assuming suitable people with the right backgrounds and specialties just happened to marry each other and are available.
- Send crews of unmarried scientists divided 50/50 between the sexes and hope they work out some sort of arrangement among themselves on the way to Mars. But that's what NASA hires psychologists for.

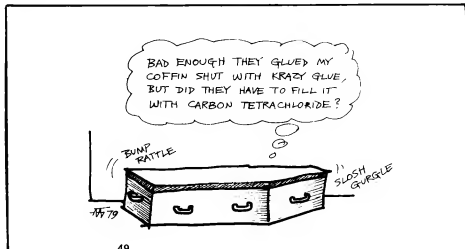
'Still I'm not sure if Richardson's speculation would even occur to anyone now. The times have changed.

'I'm also reminded of a comment Raquel Welch made at the time of the Vietnam War about Bob Hope's overseas tours. She said in effect that for all of Hope's good intentions (entertaining the troops, doing his bit for his country, etc), it was probably horribly cruel to parade bouncing and dancing starlets across the stage in front of men far from home who hadn't seen any women in months and wouldn't see any for even more months. Welch added that she thought the best thing to boost the morale of the soldiers was not frustrating them with the sight of beautiful women they couldn't have

-- send them prostitutes instead. (I'm not quoting her exactly, but that was the sense of it.) The statement got her some amount of criticism at the time, but she may have been right.

'The "kill-the-girls" syndrome that you and Bev Romig-Parker are discussing ... Instead of an "unconscious male hatred for women" as you suggest, could it perhaps be an attempt for dramatic reasons to push the button connected to a man's protective feelings for women? This won't win me any points with those who theorize that men and women are simply standard-issue persons with slightly different plumbing (and everything else is environment and culture), but if a man has the normal protective instinct towards women, and he sees a woman threatened, violated, or murdered, even in a dramatic presentation, isn't his first reaction anger (that the thing is happening), pity (for the victim), hatred (for the victimizer), and even frustration (that he is powerless to do anything about it)? And isn't his involvement in the story all the more intense? Okay, so it's manipulation, but isn't it a possible explanation? Then there are the guys who identify with the victimizer ... or at least somebody's been buying a lot of G or books over the last decade and a half.

'If you'd'll forgive me for toothing my own horn, I recently sold my first SF story -- to a Dutch magazine (talk about opening off-Broadway!). I got a copy of the magazine a few weeks ago, and to my astonishment, my name was even on the cover, sandwiched between Joe Haldeman and Donald A. Wollheim... as if anybody in Holland knows who I am! But I was happy about it. Of course, my joy was somewhat moderated when I sat down and actually read my story as it had been translated and found some glaring errors (like the translator confused my mention of Twister,



the party game, with the Twist, the dance. If I sell any more stories to our friends across the water, I wonder if I can insist on the right to approve translations before they're printed?

'Speaking of translations, remember that line in Heinlein's THE DOOR INTO SUMMER where the hero wakes up in the future, reads a newspaper, and comes across a mention of the King of France -- "King? Oh well, French politics might turn up anything." The French edition of *Une Porte sur l'Ete* does not include that line.

'What's more, when I checked it just now to confirm it, I found two distinct errors in translation within a few lines of each other: Heinlein: LUNA SHUTTLE STILL SUSPENDED FOR GEMINIDS -- Twenty-Four-Hour Station Suffers Two Punctures, No Casualties.

Translation: LUNA SHUTTLE STILL SUSPENDED FOR GEMINIDS -- Two Punctures In Twenty-Four Hours. No Casualties.

Heinlein: ...What was this "Poudre Sanitaire" they were considering using on the "Wogglies"? -- whatever they were. Radioactive, maybe?

Translation: What was this sanitary powder they were preparing against the "Wogglies"? And what were they? Radioactive mutants?

'If I ever have a day where I'm utterly desperate for something to do, I might sit down and compare the two versions line by line and see if many more goofs turn up.

'Well, I shouldn't be too hard on the poor translator. I've done translating work in the past and I've got a few similar howlers on my conscience. But I wonder if one reason why Erich von Daniken never caught on in the United States to the extent he did in Europe is because he was slaughtered by his English translator, making him appear far more foolish than he did in his own original prose. I reviewed that von Daniken comic book that came out recently (THE GODS FROM OUTER SPACE) FOR THE COMICS JOURNAL, and I found it riddled with ghastly errors in translation when I compared it with the German version; von Daniken didn't write it, but his regular English translator translated it. Just awful.

'By the way, ever wonder where Poul Anderson got the name "Tolk" for the alien linguist and interpreter in THE MAN WHO COUNTS? "Tolk" is the Danish word for "interpreter". Aren't in-jokes fun?'

(In STAR WHORES the Space Guilds have a contract with the corporation

which owns the ship which calls for a minimum number of visits by a member of the Companion Guild, per week. The officers of the ship and the executives on board, of course, have the services of a higher grade Companion than do the crew and miners. Such contract provisions are common in this future.

(If current labor contracts can include the quality of food, work periods, fringe benefits concerning physical health...why not the inclusion of sexual/mental well-being? And why not make Companions under contract to serve the sexual needs of women, in certain work situations? The social and psychosexual forces involved are almost the same.

(A workforce of prostitutes always gathers around (or behind) any army, formally or informally, legally or illegally....regardless of the Public Morality which, haggard by political, religious and sexual illusions, pretends to forbid it.)

LETTER FROM A.D. WALLACE
306 E. Gatehouse Dr. H
Metairie, LA 70001
Jan. 1980

'Kilothanks for the solid #34. The stature and reputé are maintained. Congratulations on being the Early Bird with U.K. Le Guin's MALFRENA. But I would welcome also a review by your house-vivisector, Darrell Schweitzer. Your own was the first I have read in a fan(?)zine. But mild, not at all Geisian.

'The reviews in SFR are not infrequently of good calibre and have that crabbed candor and painful honesty when that is called for. Too often a reviewer deeply immersed in an appreciation of the genre writes with laudative superlatives, and the piece dwindles into dull trivialities. Such misleads the purchaser of the book. Moreover, there is a collection of hackneyed formulas in use, most of which are trite and redundant -- "if the author continues to improve we may expect great things of him" -- is one of them, a patent truism.'

((Once in a while a book is reviewed twice in SFR because I forget which reviews are in hand and/or which books I have reviewed. And once in a blue moon a book seems to require two viewpoints.

((In this issue, for instance, Ursula's THE BEGINNING PLACE is

looked at twice, once by me...because I forgot about the other review in the file.

((I am more reader oriented in my reviewing; my concerns are how interesting, exciting, involving a book is, and with some concern for writing skills and techniques. I have little analytical/metaphorical interest; blatant Messages and Distractions do not impress me or tickle any urge to dialectic or trigger a need to trace literary allusions or influences. On the contrary---such concerns make me tired.))

LETTER FROM JAMES PATRICK BAEN
EX. ED. ACE SCIENCE FICTION
360 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010
Jan. 11, 1980

'It has come to our attention that many people think that THE SPIRIT OF DORSAI is or at least purports to be a novel. It isn't, and it doesn't. What it is, is two novellas, one a reprint, one original, combined into a thematic whole with interstitial material. First published in 1979, the new novella is AMANDA MORGAN, and it is eligible for awards in the SF novella category for originals published that year.

'The same is true in fantasy, by the way, for THE DEMON OF SCATTERY, by Poul Anderson and Mildred Downey Broxon, which just squeaks in at 39,000 words.'

LETTER FROM DELLA WILLIAMSON
1916-A W. 31ST STREET
VANCOUVER, WA 98660
March, 1980

'I'd like to announce the formation of a science fiction club here in Vancouver. It meets the second Wednesday of each month at the Port Vancouver Regional Library. The club is in the process of publishing a fanzine for local science fiction writers (amateurs). What we are planning is a fact sheet (some phase of science, etc.), an art section, fiction, letters to the editor, activity page (acrostics, crosswords, cryptograms, etc.) science fiction movie reviews and a classified ad section, 104 a word.

'The mag is \$9 a year, \$1 for a sample issue (per issue locally picked up).

'For more information concerning the club or "zine" call 6955917.'

LETTER FROM ERWIN H. BUSH
THE BURNING BUSH PRESS
POB 7708, Newark DE 19711

'To begin with, I have enclosed your subscription renewal form with a check for \$12.00; that should put you in a good mood! I also would like to thank you very much for the kind review you did of Mark Roger's THE RUNESTONE ... both he and I appreciate it greatly. (I am the owner/operator of THE BURNING BUSH PRESS, originally created for the sole purpose of publishing that book.)

'There is one little problem with your listing; you have the address as Newark NJ instead of Newark DE. You did have the sacred Zip Code correct, so I expect the Post Awwful can figure it out in time. But I would appreciate it if you list a correction.'

(Every editor learns to apologize gracefully. I of course, having had so much practice, am the most graceful of all. When I receive letters like yours, Erwin, I howl, "AAAAARRRG-GGGHHHHH!!!" But never in print.

((As amends, let me note that your next publishing effort, THE BRIDGE OF CATZAD-DUM And Other Stories by Mark E. Rogers is now available from you for \$6.75. And Buyers should make their checks payable to you.

((Did you know Erwin is my middle name? And that without exception all clerks and other functionaries want to make it 'Erwin.' So it goes.))

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road, Strafford,
PA, 19087
Dec. 19, 1979

'The review of THE AMERICAN MONOMYTH nearly made me exclaim aloud, 'They've stolen my idea!' because they have.

'It was my idea to turn STAR TREK into a religion for more and merrier tax-free profits. I outlined it in the lettercolumn of MYTHOLOGIES a couple years back. Basically, I would take the best/worst aspects of UFO/Shaver/Von Daniken paranoia, millennialism, and cargo cults, roll them all together and make a bundle.

'The basic tenet of the Church, O My Brothers, O My Sisters, is that The Show is truth disguised as fiction to get it past the censors. You see, otherwise they would never have let it on the air at all. (And since no one ever comes forth as a spokesman for Them, and I've never even met a card-carrying mem-

ber of this ubiquitous organization, who's to deny this?) Those Of Us In The Know, look at the series as Revealed Truth, from which it may be learned that:

1) There really is a Federation out there, complete with an Enterprise.

2) The world will be destroyed at the end of this century. Armageddon will come on the night of December 31, 1999, and once again the following year for the intellectuals.

3) Only those who attend Trek-kieCons, wear the uniforms, carry the phasers and communicators, and otherwise sell their worldly goods and give the proceeds to the Church will be saved.

4) They will be beamed aboard the Enterprise, all the women (and some of the older men) into the arms of Mr. Spock, who has a Long Reach. Those who claim he cannot embrace them all at once are spreading the Klingonian Heresy, and will be Dealt With Severely by our Shlocktroops ... er ... Spocktroops.

5) There is room for everybody. One of the fundamentalist Christian sects runs into a problem because Revelation saith the number of the elect shall be 144,000 and they have more than that in membership, but we of the True Faith know better. The Revealed Truth will show clearly on the 100th rerun or thereabouts that the Enterprise is supposed to have 400 crewpersons. Yet we only see about 20, and there are all these big empty rooms and corridors. Theologians call this The Doctrine Of The Infinite Enterprise Which Can Never Be Filled Up Except By Belief.

6) Hallelujah, Brother! Beam us up, Scotty.

7) Send \$99.95 for your introductory packet to my address. In small bills.

'On this matter of the Gor books, I have never called for censorship. The thing to do about abuses of the free press is to use the free press to condemn them. Sure, all fiction contains a certain amount of lies, but it should, unless it is completely cynical formula hackwork, contain some truth too. The only way you can make a story convincing is not to lie about certain basic realities: That there isn't always a Hero to save the day, that pain hurts, that death is not as neat and clean as little kids playing cowboys and Indians, that sex is fun but leads to complications sometimes, that falling in love is not as simple as putting on a coat.

That women do not like to be raped and beaten into submission and made to sit up and beg. I once picked a passage at random from TIME SLAVE and it read like a dog-training manual. Funny on paper, but grim in real life.'

((Oh, AAARRRGGGHHH!!! I owe an apology to BRUCE NYHOFF for not noting last issue that he is the person who wrote the review of THE AMERICAN MONOMYTH which appeared in SFR #33. He lives in Box 1182, Muskegon, MI 49443, and he writes good.

((As for you, Darrell, your desire to get rich by pushing people's instinctual and archetypal buttons (The buttons are located just behind the nipples--which explains why women have their buttons pushed more often.) is admirable, but you've got to realize how much entrenched competition you have. Moreover, this competition is often ruthless and merciless in putting down rival button-pushers. So...be careful. Be selective.

((I've often thought that a fiction writer can sell the truth all the way up to the Black Moment in the final chapter. But then, to achieve a happy ending, he must lie like hell!

((The latest Gor book is FIGHTING SLAVE OF GOR (DAM, \$2.25) issued in March, and is the fourteenth book of the counter-earth saga by John Norman. I have reviewed in this issue in "And Then I Read..."

LETTER FROM CHARLES SHEFFIELD
KIRKWOOD RESEARCH
6812 Wilson Lane
Bethesda, MD, 20034
Feb. 24, 1980

'In the three weeks or so since SFR #34, I have had four separate inquiries about the interview you did with me. That might be gratifying, but for one thing: The answer to each of the questions asked was given, in full, in the first half of the interview, in SFR #33.

'What's going on? Do you send only even-numbered issues to people here on the eastern seaboard? Or (scary thought) are SF types not able to retain information for the necessary three months?

'Either way, if you get questions and comments on SFR #34, you might tell people to go back and look at the previous issue. That's what I've been doing, if I'm convinced they can read.

'On another subject, the SFR reviews, both short works and long, are doing an awful lot of boot-llicking. I read them, and it's hard to

tell the dogs from the lions. Is there any way to persuade people that it's cheating if you only write about works that you like? A couple of years ago SFR had blood all over the walls, now it says it's blood but it tastes like chicken soup.

'And just because somebody beat you to it you should not drop the idea of doing a collection of Gilliland cartoons. You have published enough in SFR alone to make another book or two. Drop the hint, and I'm sure that I and others will send you a list of our all-time favorites. Are you sure of that L00M-PANICS address that you printed for the Gilliland collection? I wrote to them a month back, and haven't heard a word.'

((I am in the process of returning to Alexis as many of his originals as I can find. After that I'm sure he can find a publisher for several volumes of his finest. I want only to concentrate from now on in SFR---reading and reviewing, mostly, and editorializing. You're right---the magazine has become too bland of late. I hope this issue slakes your blood lust a bit. (And you'd be surprised how many others have a similar thirst.))

LETTER FROM JOHN BRUNNER
BRUNNER FACT & FICTION LIMITED
The Square House, Palmer Street
South Petherton, Somerset
TA13 5DB England
4 Feb. 1980

'Arrives SFR #34 in the middle of my final burst on STEAMBOATS ON THE RIVER -- still 500 pages short of an ending and two years overdue ...

'But I can't refrain from rolling paper into the typer to ask how, why, by what possible form of literary myopia, Ted White can imagine that "now and then a student rose" means the same as "now and then there was a student rising".

'The former conjures up this ridiculous vision of someone standing up at the back of a lecture-hall and saying, "Professor, you're fired!"

'(To which, no doubt, the reply would be: "Oh, am I? Well, goodbye!")

'Whereas the second ...

'rising n. 1. an insurrection or rebellion; revolt. 2... (this from the latest dictionary in my possession, the new Collins, published 1979.)



'''There was a student rising" does not mean "A student rose" in any branch, variety or form of English I'm acquainted with...except, apparently, Ted White's, and I think he'd better do something about that, fast!'

((For newcomers; John Brunner has had a running battle with Meddling Morons in these pages for years, in his column. Meddling Morons are those editors and copyeditors who do violence to his prose as they prepare his mss. for publication. In SFR #33 he presented another instance of editorial incompetence. I reprint that section below.

This column was intended to include another installment of "John Brunner Versus the Meddling Moron", because I just received the copy-edited script of my forthcoming Ballantine novel, THE INFINITIVE OF OD ... but for the first time in my entire career I ceremonially burned the copy-editor's work in our dining room fireplace, since it was cheaper than sending out for more Liquid Paper, and quicker, if I re-photocopied my original version and sent that back instead.

I did, however, salvage a few pages of peculiarly awful interference in order to demonstrate to the chief editor at Ballantine (who is, I'm sure, a perfectly nice person apart from his inability to choose competent sub-editors for works by yours truly) that I was arguing from sound evidence when I claimed that the copy-editor had done more harm than good.

Here is the peak and summit of her (I have the chief editor's authority for the form of that possessive) achievement:

My version: "Now and then there was a student rising to sack some particular stick-in-the-mud."

Her version: "Now and then a student would rise to sack."

Anybody who cares to write to Ballantine and advocate her dismissal will greatly oblige

JOHN BRUNNER.

((Ted White, in a letter in SFR #34, wrote:

'Finally, while I have often agreed with John Brunner about the iniquities of copyeditors, I have read both "My version" and "Her version" and I honestly can't see the superiority of his version over hers. Perhaps the fact that both versions are short of their context blinds me to the virtues of John's version, but "Her version" seems clearer and more concise. If John honestly feels that this pair of examples reveals anything other than the fact that his version is sloppier, I'd say he's too close to his story to view it dispassionately.

((The problem is that the copy-editor wasn't aware that rising can also mean a revolt or insurrection. That usage is rare in this country. Had she known, John, what you meant, she would have been correct to change the word to uprising, which is the word we know and use.))

LETTER FROM GEORGE H. SCITHERS
Editor ASIMOV'S SF MAGAZINES,
Box 13116, Philadelphia, PA,
19101
20 Feb. 1980

'Dear Dick,

'There are a couple errors in the 34th SFR which need correcting.

'On page 60, Elton Elliott claims IA's sfm is non-subscription. This is untrue. It has never been true. Elliott clearly has the monthly magazine confused with the quarterly ADVENTURE. The annual subscription rate (12 issues) is \$15.00 in the United States (foreign \$17.00) -- and the subscription address is Box 7350, Greenwich, CT 06830.

'Elliott really should check these things out (at least to the extent of looking into an issue of

the magazine) before making such statements if it's "news" he's supposed to be reporting.

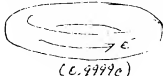
'Orson Scott Card is wrong about us publishing Joan Vinge's SNOW QUEEN. That's a rather long novel being published by Dell. We are publishing a fantasy novelet by her called "Storm King".'

((Okaaaay. Thanks for the corrections. Elton is chagrined. Orson is full of mental disquietude or distress caused by the humbling of pride. I tell you, it's tough writing for SFR.))

LETTER FROM RICH DODGE
525 N. Miller Rd., Sp. 15
Scottsdale, AZ 85257
Dec. 21, 1979

'Assuming that you are accustomed to weird correspondence, and since I am too chicken to visit the local physics department, I thought that I would drop this little goody on you, with the thought that you or one of your correspondents might be able to evaluate the theoretical validity of the... Well, you see, there's this idea I've been kicking around for a few years, since I ran across the Lorenz equations in freshman physics. You might call this idea "relativity engineering".

'As I vaguely recall, it may have started one day when I asked myself what would be a good way to store a lot of energy, and I got to thinking about the possibility of storing kinetic, rather than potential, energy and it came that a beam of high velocity electrons could store a lot of energy by increasing mass while approaching c . Of course, in order to do this continuously, you need a closed system, so I started thinking about a torus containing a plasma of high velocity electrons.

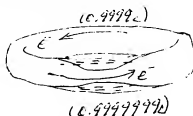


'A problem with this (I believe) is that magnetic fields have to be used to make the electrons orbit, and there is inherent energy loss due to synchrotron radiation. Maybe this could be avoided by using electrical repulsion to confine and guide the plasma instead, maybe if you could make the torus out of "collapsium", e.g., a layer of electrons inside with a layer of positrons outside, using a super high

flux density sheet laser beam as a separating insulator

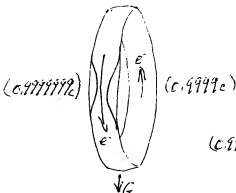
'Well, this is somewhat beside the point, but maybe makes the concept plausible enough to think about; maybe some sort of superconductor system would do the job, and maybe some energy losses could be borne, too.

'It seems to me, the next step is the interesting part. What if you had a high velocity plasma of electrons orbiting a torus, and what if the plasma were sufficiently dense so as to be essentially incompressible? Could you then maybe constrict the plasma at some point sufficiently to raise its velocity through the constricted zone, as in hydrodynamics? Viz.:



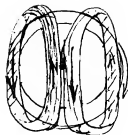
'If so, then what would happen if you could "pinch" an electron plasma from, say, about four-nines of c up to, say, seven-nines?

'What if you then set such a system on end, say, in earth's gravitational field?



'At seven-nines of c , the electrons would be traveling only three meters per second slower than the speed of light. If the torus were unsupported, it couldn't fall faster than three meters a second, because the electrons in the "pinch" can only approach the speed of light. It seems to me that here we have, maybe, a quasi-antigravity machine. Gravitational potential energy would convert to electron mass as the torus fell. (Could this become a runaway process?)

'If this works, you could have an antigravity tripod, so:



Side



Top (clumsily)

'Next, what if you laid the torus on its side with plasma passing through the "pinch" traveling toward the right at seven-nines of c ? Then you would have a hard time moving the torus toward the right, no? (Would this be an unstable situation?)



'Would this give us a "space anchor" or possibly a 4-dimensional centerboard, say, using two tori?



'Would a combination of these configurations give us a vehicle which could tack in relation to a gravitational field? Such a configuration might look like this:

'Suggestive, ain't it? (Navi-
gate by controlling the "pinches".)

'Well, if you think this is at
all worthwhile, please feel free
to disseminate or use the concept
any way you please. If it has any
theoretical validity, I would love
to have as many people thinking
about it as possible. Of course,
it seems too simple and too good to
be true (although, actual technol-
ogy would be something else again).'

*((Somehow I think this letter
should have gone to ANALOG. How-
ever, here is The Answer, folk;
do with it what you will.))*

LETTER FROM DAVE REEDER
32a Lambourne Rd
Chigwell Row, Essex
United Kingdom
11 Feb. 1980

'You carry quite frequently in
SFR details of publishers and their
ill deeds. You might be interested
in this :

'Recently Star published Gordon
Eklund's TREDIC: THE BLACK KNIGHT
OF THE SILVER SPHERE as being by
"Doc" Smith and also being "A Star
Original". Knowing that it had al-
ready been published by Baronet in
U.S. (in fact, publication details
inside of Star edition note this)
and was written by Eklund from either
notes or an outline of Smith's;
I wrote Star a letter inviting them
to comment on these two cases of
clear deception and strongly criti-
cizing them for failing to credit
Eklund at all.

'I have just received the fol-
lowing letter from Hilary Murray,
Managing Editor:

"Thank you for your letter.
We used the phrase "A Star Original"
because our edition is the first
one in our exclusive market -- UK
and Commonwealth: i.e. there is no
hardcover edition. However since
TREDIC: THE BLACK KNIGHT OF THE
IRON SPHERE was published we have
changed our policy and will only
be using the phrase on books we or-
ginate. Our contract with Baronet
stipulates that "E.E. Doc Smith"
is credited as the author, and so
we will not be making any changes
there." Letter dated 30.1.1980.'

'I'm sure you will agree with
me that this is a very unsatisfac-
tory response. Perhaps you might
like to ask Baronet what sort of
deal they make in cases like this?
Why should they credit the real
author in U.S. but deceive the pub-
lic with foreign editions. I feel

sure that this is just the sort of
corporate duplicity and denial of
authors' rights that deserves wider
publicity'

LETTER FROM NORMAN GOLDFIND,
Publisher

BARONET PUBLISHING COMPANY
Five Hundred & Nine Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10022
March 17, 1980

'This will acknowledge your let-
ter of March 2nd concerning the ab-
sence of a credit for Gordon Eklund
in connection with the U.K. editions
of the Lord Tetric books.

'As you know, Gordon Eklund is
writing the Tetric series for Baro-
net. The series is based on a
short story written by E.E. "Doc"
Smith. Both the Baronet editions
and the Ace mass market editions
credit Gordon Eklund along with
"Doc" Smith.

'Star Books, the U.K. publisher,
has elected because of marketing
considerations, to credit only E.E.
"Doc" Smith. Mr. Eklund consented
to this at the time Star contracted
for the series.

'I don't know if the above ex-
planation will satisfy your sub-
scriber, but these are the unalter-
able facts.'

*((Obviously Gordon's rights have
not been violated, since he signed
a contract giving the publisher
the options involved here. There
is a question of ethics and truth-
in-packaging when E.E. Smith is
attributed as author of a book
written by someone else. I frankly
don't see the advantage for Star
Books in this: anyone in England
who is familiar enough with science
fiction to recognize and value the
name of E.E. Smith will know he is
dead... Ahh, Star wants the reader
to think the Tetric novels are re-
prints of old E.E. Smith books?
But they claim the books are 'origi-
nals'? I'm confused.))*

LETTER FROM LYNNE HOLDOM
POB #5
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442
March 17, 1980

'I will say that I liked STAR
WHORES better than IMAGE OF THE
BEAST by Farmer. While not terri-
bly fond of sex scenes, at least

most of yours seemed happy rather
than desperate. Nobody was getting
hurt per se. I realize that there
were some murders but that's a whole
other thing. I like Agatha Christie
and Ellery Queen. I will also say
that I had the murderer pegged early
on. Maybe this is the result of
reading too much Agatha Christie,
Ellery Queen and John Dickson Carr.

'I wonder what Sharon Jarvis
said about it as a publishable nov-
el. I certainly liked it better
than a lot of what I've read recent-
ly. I read it all at one sitting.
I didn't find the idea of Companions
upsetting as each knew what she was
getting into before she ever chose
it for a job. (I was rather curious
about the gay crewmen or are they
flunked on psychological grounds?)
I also got the definite impression
that Toi felt rather superior to
the crewmen (definitely so in the
case of the captain). She certainly
did not need to apologize to any-
one and was certainly near the top
in her chosen profession.

'Not that I am all that expert,
but I think it could be commercial-
ly successful if about twice as
long, with a few more plot complica-
tions (more a mystery and a real
puzzler) and a bit more sex but bet-
ter spaced so you don't feel that
there is a sex scene every page and
a half or whatever. I suppose the
porn market operates that way but a
mystery novel with frank sex scenes
shouldn't. And you could put in
some group sex which is about the
only thing you left out. Do two
Companions ever service two men at
the same time making a nice four-
some? Just curious. I'd also like
to see Toi's background filled in a
bit more and maybe a couple of the
men. She also probably does have
favorites among the men only can't
show it. This could be a slight
conflict (she is a professional after
all) -- You could also allude to
some of the training in flashback.
Also a bit more on the cutthroat
company spying and competition.
And go into the background of some
of the leading characters a bit
more.

'I guess you gather that I was
not upset or shocked by the sex
scenes. I wasn't particularly turned
on either. I think you made a
good and necessary use of sex in
delineating Mantler's personality
and in the Captain's. People obses-
sed with penis size do seem to be
stuck in adolescence and his liking
for sex with lolitas pointed the
same way.'

*((Your advice is good, but I'm too
lazy to follow it. Sharon Jarvis,
by the way, has not seen STAR*

WHORES. (No editor has seen it; I'm not especially interested in sending it around.) She saw ONE IMMORTAL MAN.)

LETTER FROM DARRELL SCHWEITZER
113 Deepdale Road
Strafford, PA 19087
March 20, 1980

'A couple points raised by Orson Scott Card's column: No, you couldn't do to Mark Twain what he did to Cooper, or at least you could not do it intelligently and convincingly. Ridicule can be a very useful form of criticism if and only if the thing being ridiculed is as demonstrably stupid as the critic says it is. Otherwise the ridicule will not connect with reality. The critic will say, "Isn't this absurd?" and the reader will say, "Actually, no. It seems rather sensible to me." You could take some of Twain's faults, notably the mawkishness of something like "Joan of Arc" or maybe some of the later things like "A Horse's Tale" or some of the clumsy Biblical satires, and wave them all over, but it would be difficult to do a thorough job of destruction the way Twain did with Cooper.

'The Twain essay is actually something every would-be writer should read because of the many sound principles of storytelling therein demonstrated (by Cooper's violation of them). Twain isn't an obvious example of what not to do. He doesn't have cannonballs rolling for miles and leaving tracks, or houseboats squeezing along rivers only inches wider than they are while Indians drop into the water behind, one after another, as the boat gets farther away. His characters weren't inconsistent in the way they spoke.

'Russ, when writing about sword and sorcery, may well be ridiculing what she doesn't understand (her prejudice is a very common one) or at least what she doesn't bother to try to understand, but Twain understood Cooper, and that's why he was ridiculing him, and that is how he turned ridicule into a useful critical tool. A sword and sorcery story may be achieving effects which are of no interest (or even incomprehensible) to Russ, but this doesn't mean the gross stupidities of the form can't be ridiculed.

'One of the funniest sword and sorcery blunders I ever saw was in Gardner Fox's KOTHAR AND THE CONJURER'S CURSE, in which our hero is looking on as villagers pile firewood about a woman bound to a stake

uttering things like "We must not suffer a thing to live" which accuses her of causing blight, drought, athlete's foot, etc. After this has gone on for a few hundred words, our hero begins to catch on. His "quick wits", we are told, caused him to realise that "they meant to do her harm, although for what reason, he knew not". When reviewing the book, I merely quoted the passage, implied that the rest of the book was similar, and let Fox hang himself.

'Onward: I think the whole point of Ursula LeGuin's "The Pathways of Desire" is the ending, which is not a dumb idea people are always suggesting to Card or anyone else. The dumb idea is the South Sea Island Planet, which is biologically absurd, but a cliché in science fiction. LeGuin's explanation that it's being dreamed by an adolescent who doesn't know much about life is more plausible than the standard one we see in space opera. (i.e. no explanation, or "parallel evolution".) Of course, this makes the story rather inbred. It's more of a commentary on the field than a proper story.

'Like Card, I have a bitch about current publishing. Have you noticed that the art of book manufacturing has all but disappeared, except in the specialty presses? I noted that the Dial edition of Joan Vinge's SNOW QUEEN has a fairly good binding (cloth hinges and spine with cardboard boards) and is printed on good paper, but the pages themselves are glued in like a paperback. For all the fancy boards, that book will be a pile of sheets in 30 years or so, as soon as the glue goes. Nobody sews a book properly anymore. They rarely glue them semi-properly. Doubleday has always been the cheapest and shoddiest in the business. A modern Doubleday book is probably less durable than the average paperback (certainly far less so than a good paperback, like a Newcastle or Starblaze), but a Doubleday book of the early 1970s was better put together than anything done today. Cloth over the entire boards. Good paper. Cloth reinforcements inside the spine where the pages are gathered. The books were thin which gave them an important advantage in that they didn't get pulled apart every time they were opened the way a thick book with glued pages will. In other words, the cheapie of 1970 would be positively luxurious by the standards of 1980.

'One wonders why hardcovers are published at all anymore. I am certainly willing to pay a couple extra bucks for a durable hardcover,

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and I think libraries would be too. Otherwise, there's no reason not to wait for the paperback. I suspect that if Gregg Press is around in 15 years, they'll be doing editions of the hardcovers of the present to preserve them for posterity, since all the originals will have disintegrated. I also suspect that as far as major publishers go, the art of making a book on the level of a Don Grant edition will soon be as obsolete and esoteric as medieval manuscript illumination.

'If it's worth having, it's worth having in an edition that won't crumble. Now you see why I hope SFR never goes newsprint again.'

((Thanks for the letter, especially the remarks on the quality of book publishing. SFR... Well, I have no plans at all of ever going back to newsprint, but using cheaper paper is more an economic than an aesthetic decision. It may come to a choice: fewer pages or cheaper paper))

((I've seriously considered doing without envelopes---address of subscriber imprinted on back cover---but the mechanics of that involve switching to a different addressing machine, typing thousands of address stencils... The cost of the new machine and stencil would offset the envelope savings for years.

((Why not run SFR through my present addressing machine? The Sorptomatic won't take anything thicker than 1/8", and 64 pages of #50 paper are too much. Of course, if I cut SFR to 48 pages... But I can't do that in good conscience. So we'll continue with envelopes and 64 pages until abject poverty forces a change.))

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REG #17 nearly ready for mailing



THE COVER THAT NEVER WAS

Planned as the cover for THE ALIEN CRITIC
But aborted when circumstances forced a
Change to SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW
Here is a humorous Steve Fabian few have
Seen

COMING APART AT THE THEMES

Anybody who is eccentric enough to write SF for a living has to get used to one recurrent little scene. You meet a new group of people at a party or in a pub or somewhere, and you get introduced as a science fiction writer, and because that's an unusual occupation there's a mild ripple of surprise. It usually dies away quickly, because most people have no real interest in the subject, and you're quite glad because you want to get down to the serious business of the day. You are just getting your nose buried in beer froth when you suddenly become aware that one of your brand-new acquaintances is still regarding you with bright-eyed surmise and is edging closer. He begins to talk and your worst fears are realized -- he is a BAOI expert. That doesn't mean he's a devotee of classical music -- only that he has read something by the BACH quartet (Bradbury, Asimov, Clarke and Heinlein) and therefore regards himself as an authority on SF. It also means he's going to ask you some questions and you begin to slurp your beer faster because you reckon you already know what they'll be.

Near the top of the popularity league is "What name do you write under?" which when freely translated means, "I've never heard of you". Another favourite is "Have you had anything published?" which when freely translated also means, "I've never heard of you". Or he may say "Is there much money in SF?" which means "Why don't you buy yourself a decent pair of shoes?" Then comes the big one -- "Where do you get your ideas from?"

That's a query which never fails to produce a pang of unease in my breast, because it reminds me of how precarious my livelihood is. I need ideas, but haven't the foggiest notion where they come from. It's a bit like being a sculptor and relying for your raw materials on

passers-by lobbing rocks over your fence. The situation is made worse by the fact that a high proportion of the ideas which do come along, although of commercial standard, fall into categories that I'm prejudiced against and therefore can't use. Whole areas of SF are shut off because of my mental quirks, and that's serious because a narrowing of scope increases the chances of beginning to repeat oneself.

An example of one of the great themes of SF that I can't touch is the emissary-from-Earth yarn. The set-up is always the same -- a lone ambassador from Earth has to penetrate an alien society, and it is arduous and dangerous work because the natives have all kinds of baffling customs and thought processes, and just when the hero thinks he is beginning to understand them and make a bit of progress he finds himself inexplicably back to square one again. It can take him up to 300 pages to lay bare the central mystery, and it usually turns out to be something like that when these aliens have sex they stick it in each other's ears, which meant that every time he said "Lend me your ear" to somebody he was committing a terrible social gaffe.

The reason I don't go for that type of story is that the big surprise never really surprises me. There are too many options. The number of peculiarities that the writer can give his alien societies is practically infinite, and where anything is possible nothing is surprising. Only when the possibilities are sharply limited and defined can the writer dazzle me by opening my eyes to a permutation I might have spotted on my own had I been smarter.

Another one on which I'm out of step is the concept of human cloning. For some reason I find the no-

tion dull and boring. When I read my first clone story in ASTOUNDING about thirty years ago I thought, *How dull and boring!*, and today when I see a book about cloning I think, *How dull and boring!* The idea seems to fascinate other writers, particularly women, so I'm prepared to admit that I'm the one that's at fault.

There are, too, special difficulties associated with being a British writer living in Britain and working mainly for American markets. One of them is that I can't tackle the type of smart, cynical, realistic story which gets a lot of its effect from up-to-the-minute American slang and speech patterns. Recently, in a mood of daring, I decided that the SF community was bound to be international, perhaps even interstellar, in outlook, and so wrote a story which made some use of current British idiomatic speech. It was promptly bounced by a New York editor as being "parochial", which taught me a valuable lesson.

On the opposite side of the same coin, and admittedly because of my own shortcomings, I can't get into the lucrative market in Gothic and pseudo-Victorianism. Somehow it seems easier for American writers, living in an ultra-modern society, to develop the necessary degree of involvement and fascination with the world of a century or two ago. It has for them the requisite degree of strangeness which captivates the SF-type mind, whereas I -- whose local pub has been in service as an inn for 500 years -- am quite inured to the glamour of the past. (The only frisson of excitement I have managed to get from living in an historical area came a couple of years ago when I was thrown out of Wordsworth's cottage.)

One recognised way of producing SF is to bone up on some branch of science or technology and pummel the knowledge until it yields up a short story or novel, but for me that path is fraught with many dangers. For one thing, especially if the day's output looks like being a bit low, there is the powerful temptation to include chunks of re-

BY BOB SHAW

search notes in undigested form -- which is a recipe for bad SF. Putting the information across in the form of dialogue can produce results that are just as dire. If you're not careful you end up with characters standing around telling each other, with ne'er a wasted word, facts they already know about things like skystalks, but which have to be passed on to the reader. It's a curious thought that knowing a lot of science can be a handicap when it comes to writing science fiction.

Other themes I can't warm to are: Galactic Empires. It's a pity about this one, because the scope is so great, but the concept has been spoiled for me by all those old space opera with their obligatory Kingdoms of Orion. Our brightest and best-known constellations were always assigned kingdoms or empires of their own. Nobody cared that a constellation is a roughly conical volume of space with its apex on Earth and a base which gets progressively larger and more unwieldy the further out one goes, or that a bright constellation like Orion, which is off the galactic plane, actually contains only a fraction of the stars that you get in an inconspicuous group like Serpens, which takes in part of the Milky Way. And nobody explained why interstellar civilisations always drew their political boundaries in accordance with the fancies of ancient Terran astronomers.

Holocaust and Post-Holocaust. Too gloomy -- besides I couldn't face yet another of those strings of pitiful survivors heading for the misty fastness of the Welsh mountains.

Alternative Histories. The objection here is the same as for the emissary-from-Earth category -- the

number of possible variants is so great that none seems remarkable. As W.S. Gilbert once said, "Where everybody is somebody, nobody is anybody".

Travel To Distant Past. This is usually a sub-variant of the alternative history theme, but one in which the course of global events is willfully changed by a protagonist from today. I learned much of my science from reading SF, and one thing of which I am sure -- in opposition to orthodox opinion -- is that being struck by lightning generally doesn't prove fatal. A far more likely outcome is that one will be hurled back into the distant past. The exact number of centuries traversed depends on such factors as the body mass of the individual, the precise voltage he withstood, and the period of history the author feels most competent to deal with. As a writer I have no objection to that sort of thing (the dramatic potential of a 150-pound human cinder is very small) but I simply wouldn't have the nerve to equip my hero with the two items he always needs most -- a university degree in the history of his temporal destination and a working knowledge of the ancient language.

Perhaps you can see the sort of predicament I'm in. I'm more-or-less down to psi powers, immortality and alien world exploration, and I've done those several times already. There isn't too much left. Let's see now -- I wonder if I could write a story about an invisible mad scientist who is awakened from suspended animation in Atlantis by his robot which warns him that a meteorite will destroy the Earth unless he can annihilate it with a black hole



MALZBERG'S COMMON BOOK OF PRAYER A Work in Progress

BY BARRY N. MALZBERG

"It is easier to stay out than to get out." -- *Samuel Clemens: THE JOURNALS OF PUDDINGHEAD WILSON*

"It is very difficult to learn from something that one already knows." -- *Robert Sheekley*

"With age doesn't come wisdom. With age comes age." -- *Jack M. Darn*

"With age doesn't come wisdom. With age comes death." -- *Bill Pronaunt*

"If something is true, it's true, whether it's happened already or not." -- *Damon Knight*

"There is something about the idea of being hanged that concentrates a man's mind wonderfully." -- *Samuel Clemens*

"You're running where nobody's chasing." -- *Scott Meredith*

"If you take a dog off the street and feed it and shelter it and give it protection, that dog will not bite you. This is the principle difference between a dog and a man." -- *Samuel Clemens*

"Truth, no matter where spoken, has the sound of a gong." -- *Henry W. Weiss*

"GALAXY (circa mid-fifties) is obviously edited by a man who fears and hates science ... FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION has the stink of wine and death." -- *Mark Clifton*

"And if you must be a writer or die, why don't you just die? Millions of people do every day with no lasting aftereffects." -- *Jack Woodford*

"Every time I hear young writers tell me how terrific a field science fiction is, I get nauseous. Then, when I hang around with some academic who tries to explain why the field isn't even literate, I get belligerent. I don't know how I feel. I don't know anything about science fiction any more." -- *Phil Klass*

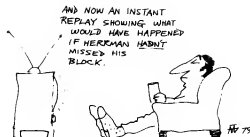
"In the middle class, it is not only money but self-delusion that makes the mare go." -- *Barry N. Malzberg*

"In these times, any moral vision has to be anguished." -- *Gail June Weidnerley*

THE HUMAN HOTLINE

S-F NEWS

BY ELTON T. ELLIOTT



Remember the address for this column is: Elton T. Elliott, SFR, 1899 Wiessner Dr. N.E., Salem, OR, 97303.

NORMESCON III NOTES

NORMESCON III, held in Seattle at the Hyatt House next to the Sea-Tac airport on March 28-30, was one of the best conventions I've attended. The convention staff was helpful and the con attendees were most friendly. The attendance of over 1200, unusually large for a regional convention, included some sixty-plus authors, with some such as Australia's A. Bertram Chandler, from overseas.

I had an absolutely marvelous time. I had a chance to chat with quite a few readers of SFR, whom I thank for their kind encouraging comments, and I also had an opportunity to talk with several authors and editors, getting information about their upcoming projects.

NORMESCON III guest of honor, Alfred Bester, will have a novel, GOLEM 100 out on the stands by now, and has about two-thirds completed another new novel, RAREE-LOVE.

NORMESCON's Fan Guest of Honor, Frederik Pohl, will have a book out in early '81, THE COOL WAR, parts of which were serialized in ASIMOV'S, and is currently working on four or five projects. One is a book for Bantam, to become a film. Another is an expansion of his novella, "The Gold at the Starbow's End", into a novel for Del Rey Books. Also in the works is the sequel to THE FARTHEST STAR, co-authored with Jack Williamson, entitled WALL AROUND A STAR. Mr. Pohl described the way he works as, "I work on one, then put it aside and work on another".

Theodore Sturgeon, NORMESCON's Toastmaster, is still working on GODOB, his long mainstream novel.

Stephen King is working on a new novel, FIRESTARTER, and is com-

pleting DANSE MACABRE, a non-fiction book on horror in the media, covering print as well as cinema, to be published by Everett House. He is also writing an original screenplay, "Creepshow", for George Romero, who directed the highly acclaimed "Dawn of the Dead" and will direct the movie version of Mr. King's novel, THE STAND. I asked Mr. King what he thought of the sensational advertising by Stanley Kubrick's cinematic version of Mr. King's best-selling novel, THE SHINING. Mr. King said he enjoyed it and that audience reaction had been very good.

William Rotsler is doing a six-part Funetti for Heavy Metal. It will be in color. Mr. Rotsler is half-way through THE HIDDEN WORLDS OF ZANDRA, sequel to ZANDRA, and will be co-authoring a new Tom Swift series with Sharmar DiVono, to be published by Simon & Schuster. Another project tentatively under way is CARTOON JAM, a book of collaborative cartoons featuring the work of Grant Canfield, Tim Kirk, Alexis Gilliland, William Rotsler, Scott Shaw and Dan Steffan.

Julian May, wife of veteran SF anthologist Ted Dikty, has sold to Houghton Mifflin a 260,000-word novel with the tentative title, THIS OUR EXILE, to be published in '81. Ms. May sold several SF stories to ASTOUNDING during the fifties, and has authored books for Children.

Ted Dikty, who collaborated with E. Bleiler on the Best SF of the Year anthologies for Doubleday in the late forties and early fifties, is currently editing Starmont Books' THE READER'S GUIDE TO SF AUTHORS. The latest works are on Arthur C. Clarke and Roger Zelazny; books by Joe Haldeman and Philip Jose Farmer are at the printers. I

will have Starmont's address next issue.

Sydney J. Van Scyoc has a new novel, SURWAIF, out from Berkley-Putnam. She has several shorter pieces which will be appearing in ASIMOV'S.

F.M. Busby has a short story collection out to market. It has been reported that he is working on a sequel to RISSA KERGUELLEN, ALIEN DEBT.

Suzy McKee Charnas is working on the third novel in the Motherline trilogy. Also out in August from Simon & Schuster, the hardback line for Pocket Book SF, will be a new novel, THE VAMPIRE TAPESTRY.

Marta Randall has completed the sequel to JOURNEY, entitled DANGEROUS GAMES -- a shorter version appeared in the April '80 issue of F&SF. She has a Dell novel in the works entitled PRIORY. Ms. Randall is currently buying for NEW DIMENSIONS 12, which she co-edits with Robert Silverberg.

Charles L. Grant has a novel out from Doubleday, RAVENS OF THE MOON, the sequel to LIONS OF THE SUN. Mr. Grant has a new Oxrun book coming from Doubleday entitled NIGHTMARE SEASONS, consisting of four novelles. In the works are two novels in the Oxrun series for Popular Library, THE GRAVE, and the second as yet untitled. He has completed SHADOWS III and is reading for SHADOWS IV.

A. Bertram Chandler is two-thirds of the way through his next novel for DAW, TO RULE THE REFUGEES, and is researching on a non-fiction book for the Australian Literature Board.

Diane Duane is working on the sequel to THE DOOR INTO FIRE for Dell, entitled THE DOOR INTO SHADOW. Ms. Duane has also authored a juv-

enile, YOU WANT TO BE A WIZARD. She has moved from L.A. back to New York and is reported to be working on two SF novels entitled LIFESTAR and STURM.

Elizabeth Lynn has completed NORTHERN GIRL, the third and final novel in The Chronicles of Torner published by Berkley-Putnam. She is working on a Sword & Sorcery novel for Pocket titled THE KYRIE OF THE WOLVES, to be illustrated by Alicia Austin.

Richard Purtill has sold a novel to DAW titled THE STOLEN GODDESS, to appear in December. He has a short story in the May F&SF. Mr. Purtill, a philosophy professor at Western Washington University, has written books on ethics, the philosophy of religion, logic, computers, Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, and is working on more novels set in the same universe as his first, THE GOLDEN GRYPHON FEATHER.

Michael G. Coney is at work on a new novel, CAT KARUNA. Other novels yet to see their first U.S. release, but already published abroad include, BRONTOMAK, THE HUMAN MENAGERIES and NEPTUNE'S CHILDRON.

Mack Reynolds, of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, is working on a non-fiction book, THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO.

John Gustafson is still looking for research material, any information on artists, for a book on the subject. Mr. Gustafson, Steve Fahnstark, Dean Smith and New Venture Publishing, Limited are jointly publishing a limited edition of COSTIGAN'S NEEDLE by Jerry Sohl, with George Barr set to do the illustrations. The address for info is:

New Venture Publishing, Ltd.
POB Box 9028
Moscow, ID 83843

John Williams, who did the music for STAR WARS, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, JAWS and many other movies, has been chosen to replace Arthur Feidler as conductor of the Boston Pops. Williams will cut down his production to one or two soundtracks a year, and it is reported that the Pops will be recording all his future movie scores.

Dean Ing will have a short story in DESTINIES #8, "Vital Signs", and will have a series of articles in upcoming issues of DESTINIES about civil defense. OMNI magazine will publish a two-part article by Mr. Ing on the future of the automobile. He has sold two short story collections to come out in late '80 or early '81: The first is ANASAZI, the title story is a short novel that will appear in ANALOG; the second collection is HANDFUL OF HELLS.

Harlequin Books, edited by Stephen Goldin, is not finished with SF yet. Plans are under way to test market for a year, a series of SF juveniles, as well as series in other genres, such as mystery and fantasy. If successful, other authors may be asked to continue the series. Harlequin's last entry into the SF field was with the unsuccessful Laser series of books, edited by Roger Elwood.

Random House has been sold to Newhouse Publications for between \$65 and \$70 million. It is rumored that the FTC blocked either Fiat or 20th Century Fox from buying Random House, maintaining that foreign-owned conglomerates already have too high a percentage of the U.S. publishing industry, and that the film industry has an inordinate percentage as well. Whether these rumors are true or not, it has become apparent that the FTC (Federal Trade Commission) is keeping a close watch



over the publishing industry and the book industry in particular.

Newhouse Publications is a family-owned enterprise that consists of over twenty daily newspapers including papers in Newark, St. Louis and Portland's own THE OREGONIAN. They own as many radio and TV stations as the law allows. In publishing they own Conde Nast, as well as magazines in a host of foreign countries, and PARADE, the newspaper magazine.

Random House publishes, among others, Ballantine Books which distributes SF under the Del Rey imprint, with Judy-Lynn Del Rey as a Random House Vice President. The new owners plan no change in editorial policy.

Random House, formerly owned by RCA, was sold as part of a consolidation attempt, since, according to SF CHRONICLE, it fared poorly in '79, grossing \$150 million, with pretax profit of from \$5 to \$10 million.

1979 set a record for SF books. According to LOCUS, over 1200 separate titles were published, slightly more than half being new releases.

This might become the record for quite some time, as the economy is going into a recession, and the publishing industry has been particularly hard hit. Sales of Gothics, Mysteries and Romances are way down; so far SF hasn't been touched to any major extent, although some publishers are canceling new programs and others are cutting down on the number of titles per month -- Dell went from three per month to two, and Berkley lowered from six per month to five. On the other hand, Pocket a year ago was doing two a month but is now putting out between five and six. Another year might give a clearer picture of the effect on SF -- so far opinions on the trend differ from editor to editor.

A.E. Van Vogt is discussing with 20th Century Fox the similarities between their movie, ALIEN, and his stories, "Black Destroyer" and "Discord in Scarlet". He is hoping to settle out of court.

THE ARBOR HOUSE TREASURY OF MODERN SCIENCE FICTION, edited by Robert Silverberg and Martin H. Greenberg, has been chosen as a book-of-the-Month Club Alternate. The 756-page book contains 39 stories originally published from 1946 to 1976.

Jack L. Chalker's last Well World book to be published in the fall by Del Rey Books, has the tentative title, TWILIGHT AT THE WELL OF SOULS. A boxed set of all five Well World books should be out for Christmas. His novel, A WAR OF SHADOWS, is set to be a movie for Columbia Pictures. His giant mainstream novel for Doubleday is completed. His third novel, in terms of writing (not publication), THE IDENTITY MATRIX, has been removed from Berkley-Putnam after failure to publish it in two years, originally set to be out in hardcover in February of '79.

The Hugo Ballots in SFR have not been ruled invalid. Contrary to statements in SF CHRONICLE #7, there was no problem with the ballots, according to Andrew Porter at NORWESCON.

Oscar Rossiter has completed a second novel, THE A.C. SCROLLS.

Marion Zimmer Bradley will have a new Darkover novel out this spring from DAW, titled TWO TO CONQUER, and has signed to do two more, tentatively titled SHARRA'S EXILE and HAWK-MISTRESS. Currently in the works for Del Rey Books is MISTRESS OF MAGIC. Completed for Ace Books is SURVEY SHIP, an illustrated novel,

with plans for another. Her novel, *HOUSE BETWEEN THE WORLDS*, has just been published by Doubleday. Finally, a fantasy about Atlantis, *THE WEB OF DARKNESS*, will be published by Donning, under their Starblaze imprint.

H. Warner Munn is working on the final volume of the *Merlin* trilogy, entitled *THE SWORD OF MERLIN*, to be published by Del Rey Books.

Stephen R. Donaldson is working on the second book in his second trilogy about *Thomas Covenant*; the working title is *THE ONE TREE*.

Octavia Butler will have a novel, *WILD SEED*, out soon.

Mildred Downey Broxon is at work on a new novel, *TOO LONG A SACRIFICE*.

Piers Anthony is at work on the sequel to his recent fantasy/sf novel, *SPLIT INFINITY*, published by Del Rey, entitled *BLUE ADEPT*; the third book of the trilogy is due. His first horror novel, *THE SHADE OF THE TREE*, is half finished. A fantasy novel, *IF I PAY THEE NOT IN GOLD, I WILL PAY THEE IN SILVER*, is currently under way. An SF novel, *MUTE*, has been sold to Avon.

George R.R. Martin, according to *FANTASY NEWSLETTER*, has had his story, "Sandkings", optioned to the movies; he is working on a novel, *RED THIRST*.

The National Fantasy Fan Federation is sponsoring an amateur writing contest. For rules, eligibility, requirements, etc., contact:

Donald Franson
6543 Babcock Avenue
N. Hollywood, CA, 91606

Kenneth Huff has sold his first story, "The Fortress of Shaitan", to Lin Carter for the third issue of *WEIRD TALES*, published by Zebra Books, and is doing the final draft of a novel, *THE TREASURE OF KASHMIR*, featuring many of the same characters as "The Fortress of Shaitan". His market report of small pressazines will be in the first issue of *PARAGON*, a new fanzine edited by Chet Clingan, set for May release.

On March 30 and April 6, KGON-FM 92.3 in Portland presented a two-part series on the future for which I interviewed ten people, and KGON's news director, Chris Burns, former book review editor for *CTHULHU CALLS*, interviewed me and edited the tapes for the weekly radio news magazine he produces, *METROSCOPE*. The ten I interviewed for the documentary were: Isaac Asimov, James Patrick Baen, Gregory Benford, Ben Bova, Freeman Dyson, Brian O'Leary, Stanley Schmidt, G. Harry Stine, A.E. Van Vogt and George Zebrowski.

BOOK NEWS

ACE

Ace Editor James Patrick Baen, mentioned at *NORMESCON* that Poul Anderson's *Flandry* series was doing very well for Ace, each book selling between 75-100,000 copies, which is very good for reprints. Mr. Baen has become a Vice President of Ace/Charter Books. Ace and Grosset & Dunlap have merged operations, with Ace reportedly getting the better of an intracorporate realignment.

Ace will publish a 550-page book, *EXPANDED UNIVERSE*, by Robert A. Heinlein. One third of the book will be the old Ace collection, *THE WORLDS OF ROBERT A. HEINLEIN*, another third will consist of uncollected material by Heinlein, and the final third will be all new material, some of which will be reprinted in the July *DESTINIES* #8, this material including new fiction, an 80-page analysis of America in the Eighties, plus many other items.



May:

Robert A. Heinlein. *EXPANDED UNIVERSE* (Trade)

Dean Ing *SOFT TARGETS* (Which will carry the cover blurb America Held Hostage)

Gordon R. Dickson *THE SPIRIT OF DORSAL*

James Patrick Baen, Ed., *THE BEST OF MY YEARS*

L. Sprague de Camp *THE PURPLE PTERODACTYLS*

Marion Zimmer Bradley *THE BRASS DRAGON*

Philip Jose Farmer *LORD OF THE TREES/THE MAD GOBLIN*

June:

Roger Zelazny *CHANGELING* (trade)

James Patrick Baen, Ed., *THE BEST OF DESTINIES*

Reginald Bretnor, Ed., *ORION'S SWORD: THE FUTURE AT WAR, VOL. #3*

Harlan Ellison *THE ILLUSTRATED HARLAN ELLISON*

Poul Anderson *A STONE IN HEAVEN* (The last Flandry novel)
Gordon R. Dickson. *NAKED TO THE STARS*

July:

Christopher Anvil *THE STEEL, THE MIST AND THE BLAZING SUN*

G.C. Edmondson *THE MAN WHO CORRUPTED EARTH*

William Tuning *FUZZY BONES* (The third in the long-awaited Fuzzy series)

James Patrick Baen, Ed., *DESTINIES #8*

Frederik Pohl *SCIENCE FICTION: STUDIES IN FILM* (Trade)

Fred Saberhagen. *EMPIRE OF THE EAST*

L. Sprague de Camp *THE TREASURE OF TRINICOS* (Original Conan novel)

L. Sprague de Camp *THE SPELL OF CONAN* (Essays)

Robert E. Howard & de Camp *CONAN THE ADVENTURER*

Howard, de Camp & Lin Carter. *CONAN THE WANDERER*

and..... *CONAN THE BUCCANEER*

BANTAM

They have printed 1 million copies of Anne McCaffrey's books.

May:

Paul Preuss *THE GATES OF HEAVEN*

Frederic Brown..... *SPACE ON MY HANDS*

June:

Michael Berlyn *CHRISTAL PHOENIX*

July:

Poul Anderson..... *CONAN THE REBEL*

Frederik Pohl & C.M. Kornbluth *BEFORE THE UNIVERSE* (Collection)

Robert E. Howard.. *THE ROAD OF AZRAEL* (Introduction by Gordon R. Dickson)

Kenneth Robeson *DOC SAVAGE #97: ...SATA BLACK/CARGO UNKNOWN*

(Note: Boris & Arkady Stugatski's novel, *SNAIL ON THE SLOPE*, scheduled for March, '80, was dropped by Bantam.)

BARONET

Spring: The fourth Lord Tedric book by Gordon Eklund.

BERKLEY

They have a brand new logo for the SF-fantasy line, among the most eye-catching I've ever seen. They have started an SF newsletter, *WORLDS AHEAD*. In their editorial to the new SF "bookazine" *THE BERK-*

LEY SHOWCASE, editors Victoria Schochet and John Silbersack, mention that in future issues they "intend to include interviews with Berkeley authors, excerpts from novels in progress or upcoming, articles on various aspects of science fiction publishing, and so on". With the March '80 release of John Varley's TITAN, they initiated an experiment, putting a "bestseller" cover on an SF novel, putting a more traditional piece of artwork on the inside front cover, thus appealing to both bestseller and SF genre readers. Their May special promotion will feature nine titles.

May:

Paul AndersonTHE DARK BETWEEN
.....THE STARS
Ben BovaTHE EXILES TRILOGY
Philip Jose FarmerA WOMAN A DAY
Frank Herbert.....THE BOOK OF FRANK
.....HERBERT
Rachel PollackGOLDEN VANITY
Bruce Lumley ...KHAI OF ANCIENT KHEM
Robert Silverberg ..ACROSS A BILLION
.....YEARS
(First in pb. for a juvenile novel,
first published in '69)
Jack Williamson...BROTHER TO DEMONS,
...BROTHER TO GODS

June:

Stephen Goldin.....THE PURITY PLOT
(#6 in the D'Alembert series)
John Wyndham.....WEB
(First U.S. edition)
Glen Cook ALL DARKNESS MET
(Final book in the Dread Empire
trilogy)
D.G. ComptonWINDOWS

THE BERKLEY SCIENCE FICTION BESTSELLER 'HALL OF FAME'

1. DUNE Frank Herbert
2. DUNE MESSIAH Frank Herbert
3. STRANGER IN A STRANGE LAND
..... Robert A. Heinlein
4. CHILDREN OF DUNE...Frank Herbert
5. THE DOSADI EXPERIMENT
.....Frank Herbert
6. ONCE AND FUTURE KING...T.H. White
7. TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVERobert
.....A. Heinlein
8. THE BOOK OF MERLYN ...T.H. White
9. I WILL FEAR NO EVIL Robert
..... A. Heinlein
10. DESTINATION: VOID..Frank Herbert

(This information from the Berkeley newsletter, WORLDS AHEAD.)

DELL

May:

Greg Bear BEYOND HEAVEN'S RIVER
Linda BushyagerTHE SPELLSTONE
.....OF SHALSTON

June:

Theodore Sturgeon...THE GOLDEN HELIX
(A collection never before
in book form)
Robert AsprinTHE BUG WARS

July:

Orson Scott Card A PLANET CALLED
.....TREASON
(A Dell Science Fiction Special)
John Shirley CITY COME A-WALKIN'
(An alumnus, along with myself
of McNary High in Salem.)
Edgar PangbornWEST OF THE SUN

DOUBLEDAY

May:

M. John Harrison ...A STORM OF WINGS
Edward Ferman (Ed.)...THE BEST FROM
.....FANTASY & SCIENCE FICTION

June:

Robert Enstrom BETA COLONY
F. Paul Wilson ...ENEMY OF THE STARS

FAWCETT

May:

Stephen Goldin...THE ETERNITY BRIGADE
Andre Norton.....SEA SIEGE

POCKET

Pocket SF Editor, Dave Hartwell, says he believes there will be no recession in the SF field, but it will be harder for first novels to sell, presumably because of publishers' multi-book contractual obligations.

May:

Colin Wilson THE SPACE VAMPIRES
Walter M. Miller, Jr. ...THE BEST OF
..... WALTER M. MILLER JR.
William Barmwell...THE BLESSING PAPERS
Jack WilliamsonTHREE FROM
.....THE LEGION
Marta Randall..... ISLANDS
Andre Norton and Dorothy Madlee
...STAR KA'ATS AND THE PLANET PEOPLE

PUTNAM

May:

John Varley WIZARD
D.G. Compton.....ASCENDANCIES
Barry Longyear MANIFEST DESTINY
David Bischoff STARFALL

CORRECTION: In SFR #34, page 62, column 2, the Dial Books heading should have begun just prior to the Jakes and Kane title, EXCALIBUR, rather than over the Dell April titles.

AVON

May:

Linda HaldemanTHE LASTBORN
.....OF ELVINWOOD
Michael Moorcock BREAKFAST IN
.....THE RUINS
John Christopher...NO BLADE OF GRASS

HARCOURT, BRACE JOVANOVIH

May:

Stanislaw Lem...RETURN FROM THE STARS

DAW

May:

Donald A. Wollheim (Ed.)...THE 1980
....ANNUAL WORLD'S BEST SF



N.C. HennebergTHE GREEN GODS
 (Translated by C.J. Cherry)
 Stephen TallTHE PEOPLE BEYOND
THE WALL
 A.E. Van Vogt ROGUE SHIP
 Tanith Lee VOLKHAVALAR

DEL REY

May:
 Alan Dean Foster CACHALOT
 Judy Lynn Del Rey (Ed.)..... STELLAR
SCIENCE FICTION STORIES #5
 Elizabeth Buyer.SWORD IN THE SATCHEL
 Gertrude Freidberg.THE REVOLVING BOY
 John WyndhamTHE MIDWICH CUCKOOS
 John Brunner STAND ON ZANZIBAR

PLAYBOY

May:
 Graham Diamond SAMARKAND
 Robert Curry FordHEX

SIGNET

May:
 Barbera PaulUNDER THE CANOPY

ZEBRA

May:
 Poul Anderson THE LAST VIKING:
 .. BOOK 2 THE ROAD OF THE SEAHORSE
 (Book 1 was to be scheduled for
 March)
 Mike Sirota MASTER OF BORANGA

MAGAZINE NEWS

ANALOG

I discussed with Stanley Schmidt the Davis Publications' purchase of ANALOG from Conde Nast in late February, with neither side publicly disclosing the price paid. Conde Nast, publishers of VOGUE, HOUSE & GARDEN, GLAMOR, BRIDE'S, SELF and GENTLEMEN'S QUARTERLY, had long since abandoned the fiction market, and were clearly happy to get rid of ANALOG; although profitable, it was obviously the odd magazine out. Davis Publications owner, Joel Davis, reportedly stated "ANALOG has a wonderful reputation; it has fifty years of history; it's a quality magazine that unfortunately didn't belong with a firm such as Conde Nast. We will treat it with the consideration it deserves. ANALOG has finally found a home where it will be treated properly".

He mentioned that Davis, publishers of ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE, ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE and ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE, plans to substantially increase sales and promotion for ANALOG. Production specifics aren't completely settled, but on May first ANALOG will move to the Davis offices on 380 Lexington from their current offices on 304 East 45th. The masthead will not be changed until the September '80 issue, however, and as of late March, Mr. Schmidt reported he was in the process of putting together two issues at once, due to Davis being on a different production schedule with a different lead time than Conde Nast. There will be a slight reduction in page size of ANALOG to accommodate Davis' printer, but no change in distribution, as both magazines are distributed by Curtis Publications.

Analog Books will be continued, and the new publisher, according to Mr. Schmidt, is interested in publishing more anthologies.

Mr. Schmidt reported that those connected with Davis reassured him that ANALOG will maintain a "separate voice" from ASIMOV'S.

COMMENT: This is all fine and good, but it is actions that count. ANALOG has many long-time subscribers who are accustomed to the advantages of receiving their copies in a brown wrapper: This allows ANALOG to keep its cover soft, it protects the cover from damage by the Post Awwful and avoids having the label stuck on the magazine; that is very important, for I know many who won't subscribe to a magazine that sticks labels on the magazine proper, plus many subscribers have expressed to me their concern that ANALOG under Davis Publications may change this present policy. (One subscriber said that if the wrappers were discontinued he would cancel his subscription.) Labels on the magazine damage its resale value, making it unpalatable for collectors.

My brother's April '80 issue of ASIMOV'S not only came sans a wrapper, but its front cover was "graced" by a subscription label, not the logical backside -- the cover, mind you, obscuring a delightful painting by Alex Schomburg. I hope the Davis people see the need to change their ASIMOV'S label policy and adopt and maintain the more considerate Conde Nast policy. Aside from this labeling policy, Davis has done a marvelous job with ASIMOV'S.

GALILEO AND GALAXY

LOCUS #230 reported both magazines are going back to subscriptions/

specialty store distribution systems. It is rumored the owners are plagued with cash flow problems and poor newsstand sales of GALILEO.

CONCLUDING WORDS:

Thanks to all those who sent information; each is greatly appreciated.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Feb. 15, 1980

Fortress Publications is pleased to announce the debut of ULTRA MAGAZINE. The first issue of this semi-prozine will appear about the end of May/80. The cover price will be \$1.50 and a six issue subscription will be \$9.00. ULTRA will be published bi-monthly. ULTRA will be approximately 8 1/2" by 11" in size and about sixty-four pages thick depending on advertising revenues. ULTRA will be printed on newsprint for the foreseeable future. It will be professionally stapled a la GALILEO magazine.

The editor and publisher will be Joe MacDonald, a long time SF and Fantasy fan, although relatively unknown to the masses.

Mr. MacDonald is looking for fiction from 1000 to 10,000 words. Payment at present is 1¢ to 2¢ per word. As ULTRA will about three quarters fiction, there is a large need for manuscripts. Payment is on acceptance and manuscripts will be returned within six weeks of arrival.

He is also looking for art work, especially pencil work. Payment varies from \$2.00 to \$15.00. He needs book reviews, fan news items, information on fanzines, genzines and prozines as well.

While there are no particular taboos at ULTRA, MacDonald is looking for stories with an upbeat ending. Anybody with new ideas on what should be included in an SF magazine is invited to send submissions.

All material should be sent, a SASE included. International reply coupons or coin is acceptable.

ULTRA MAGAZINE will not be available at your local newsstand. Fortress Publications is now negotiating with a specialty magazine distributor for college and bookstore distribution. Subscriptions are available by sending cheque or money order to ULTRA MAGAZINE, P.O. Box 545, Truro, N.S., Canada, B2N 5C7. Stores not currently being serviced by a distributor should write to the address above to receive information on how to receive ULTRA and retail discounts.

BACK ISSUES

THE ALIEN CRITIC SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW

NO OTHER BACK ISSUES ARE
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EACH ISSUE CONTAINS MANY REVIEWS.
EACH ISSUE CONTAINS LETTERS FROM
WELL-KNOWN SF & FANTASY WRITERS,
EDITORS, PUBLISHERS AND FANS.

THE FOLLOWING LISTINGS ARE OF FEATURED CONTRIBUTIONS

THE ALIEN CRITIC #5 Interview
with Fritz Leiber; "The Literary
Dreamers" by James Blish; "Irvn
Binkin Meets H.P. Lovecraft" by
Jack Chalker.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #6 Interview
with R.A. Lafferty; "The Trench-
ant Bludgeon" by Ted White; "Trans-
lations from the Editorial" by
Marion Z. Bradley.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #8 "Tomorrow's
Libido: Sex and Science Fiction"
by Richard Delap; "The Trench-
ant Bludgeon" by Ted White; "Ban-
quet Speech" by Robert Bloch;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #9 "Reading
Heinlein Subjectively" by Alexei
and Cory Panshin; "Written to a
Pulp!" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "The
Shaver Papers" by Richard S. Shav-
er.

THE ALIEN CRITIC #10 An Inter-
view with Stanislaw Lem; "A Nest
of Strange and Wonderful Birds"
by Sam Merwin, Jr.; Robert Bloch's
Guest Of Honor speech; The Hein-
lein Reaction.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #14 Inter-
view with Philip Jose Farmer;
"Thoughts On Logan's Run" by Will-
iam F. Nolan; "The Gimlet Eye" by
John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #15 Inter-
view with L. Sprague de Camp;
"Spec-Fic and the Perry Rhodan
Ghetto" by Donald C. Thompson;
"Uffish Thots" by Ted White.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #16 Inter-
view with Jerry Pournelle; "The
True and Terrible History of Sci-
ence Fiction" by Barry Malzberg;
"Noise Level" by John Brunner;
"The Literary Masochist" by Rich-
ard Lupoff.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #17 Inter-
view with George R. R. Martin;
Interview with Robert Anton Wilson;

"Philip K. Dick: A Parallax View"
by Terrence M. Green; "Microcos-
mos" by R. Faraday Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #18 Inter-
view with Lester del Rey; Inter-
view with Alan Burt Akers; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "A Short
One for the Boys in the Back Room"
by Barry Malzberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #19 Inter-
view with Philip K. Dick; Inter-
view with Frank Kelly Freas; "The
Notebooks of Mack Sikes" by Larry
Niven; "Angel Fear" by Freff; "The
Vivisector" by Darrell Schweitzer.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #20 Inter-
views with Theodore Sturgeon
and Joe Haldeman; "Noise Level" by
John Brunner; "The Vivisector" by
Darrell Schweitzer; "The Gimlet
Eye" by John Gustafson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #21 Inter-
views with Leigh Brackett & Ed-
mond Hamilton, and with Tim Kirk;
"The Dream Quarter" by Barry Mal-
zberg; "Noise Level" by John Brunner.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #22 Inter-
view with John Varley; "S-F and
S-E-X" by Sam Merwin, Jr.; "After-
thoughts on Logan's Run" by Will-
iam F. Nolan; "An Evolution of Con-
sciousness" by Marion Zimmer Brad-
ley.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #23 Inter-
views with A. E. Van Vogt,
Jack Vance, and Piers Anthony;
"The Silverberg That Was" by Rob-
ert Silverberg.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #24 Inter-
views with Bob Shaw, David G.
Hartwell and Algis Budrys; "On Be-
ing a Bit of a Legend" by Algis
Budrys.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #25 Inter-
views with George Scithers,
Poul Anderson and Ursula K. Le
Guin; "Flying Saucers and the Sym-
metry Factor" by Ray Palmer; ONE
IMMORTAL MAN--Part One.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #26 Inter-
views with Gordon R. Dickson
and Larry Niven; "Noise Level" by
John Brunner; "Fee-dome Road" by
Richard Henry Klump; ONE IMMORTAL
MAN--Part Two.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #27 Inter-
views with Ben Bova and Stephen
Fabian; "Should Writers Be Serfs...
r Slaves?"; SF News; SF film news;
The Ackerman Interview; ONE IM-
MORTAL MAN--Part Three.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #28 Inter-
view with C.J. Cherryh; "Beyond
Genocide" by Damon Knight; ONE IM-

MORTAL MAN--Conclusion; SF News;
SF film news & reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #29 Inter-
views with John Brunner, Michael
Moorcock and Hank Stine; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; SF News,
SF film reviews.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #30 Inter-
views with Joan D. Vinge, Stephen
R. Donaldson, and Norman Spinrad;
"The Awards Are Coming!" by Orson
Scott Card; S-F News; Movie News.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #31 Inter-
view with Andrew J. Offutt; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner; "On the Edge
of Futuria" by Ray Nelson.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #32 Inter-
view with Andrew J. Offutt, Part 2;
Interview with Orson Scott Card;
"You Got No Friends in This World"
by Orson Scott Card; "The Human
Hotline" by Elton T. Elliott.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #33 Inter-
view with Charles Sheffield; "A
Writer's Natural Enemy--Editors"
by George R.R. Martin; "Noise
Level" by John Brunner.

SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW #34 Inter-
view with Donald A. Wollheim; "Har-
lan Ellison--a profile" by Charles
Platt; Charles Sheffield interview
Part 2; "You Got No Friends in This
World" by Orson Scott Card.

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